



Death

and its

Mystery

Volume 2 - *At The Moment of Death*

Camille Flammarion

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DEATH AND ITS MYSTERY
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Manifestations and Apparitions of the Dying; "Doubles;" Phenomena of Occultism

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No one knows what death is, and whether it be not the greatest of all good things for Man. Nevertheless, it is feared as though it were the supreme evil.

Athenians, you have just condemned me to death. The divine inner voice which, my whole life long, has never ceased to make itself heard in me, has today been silent, and I did not defend myself against your accusations. This means that what is happening to me is good.

I am about to suffer the fate to which you have condemned me; but iniquity and infamy will cling to the memory of my judges. I accept my punishment, and they theirs. It was thus predestined, and, in my belief, all is for the best.

When death comes near to Man, that which is mortal in him is scattered; that which is immortal and incorruptible withdraws intact.

Socrates



THE POSITIVE METHOD

*Let us have eyes, that we may see;
Minds, that we may judge.*

In the exactions of the experimental method lies its force. The more rigorous we are in the admission and interpretation of facts, the more firmly will our proofs be established. As we proceed farther, let us leave no uncertainty behind us; let us ask ourselves if the foregoing three hundred pages have proved the existence of the soul as an entity independent of the body. We must determine whether the supernormal faculties, the manifestations of which we have described, — presentiments, the visioning of the future, the will acting without the spoken word and without outward sign, telepathy, things perceived at distances too great for the eye to reach, the functioning of the soul beyond the sphere of the physical senses, — whether all these could not be attributed, strictly speaking, to unknown properties of our vital organisms. Does man know himself in his entirety? Has his evolution reached this limit? Could not these transcendental psychic faculties belong to the brain?

We must investigate all freely, in full liberty of conscience, without preconceived ideas, unfettered by any system.

The facts that are to follow will prove superabundantly the truth of our thesis, through manifestations observed round and about death and after death. But it may be helpful to answer at once some possible objections.

First, as to the debatable value of human testimony. We have more than once pointed out the scientific weakness of this sort of evidence, and we know that we must constantly challenge it. Such evidence is uncertain, varies with changes in weather, is self-contradictory even as to actual events about which it would seem that unanimity should be the rule. Human vision is faulty. Each of us sees with his eyes and with his mind (even in exact astronomical observations; this is called the personal equation). Accounts by different witnesses of the same occurrence differ, and, on the other hand, recollections easily undergo modification, — even admitting perfect good faith and an absolute sincerity, which do not always exist. We must also realize that among our strange humankind we come upon men devoid of sensibility, and also upon farceurs without scruples, any sense of honor, or even simple honesty. So we must be constantly on our guard. But between such an attitude and one of rejecting all, denying all, lies a gulf that uncompromising deniers do not appear to measure.

Despite the acknowledged uncertainty of historical evidence, it would seem difficult to doubt that a man named Ravailac stabbed King Henry IV on May 14, 1610, in the rue de la Ferrounerie, in Paris; that King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, depriving France of excellent citizens; that Napoleon's body lies today in a marble sarcophagus under the dome of the Invalides; and that certain armies met in combat in eastern France from August 3, 1914, to November 11, 1918. We may all admit, it would appear, without unduly compromising ourselves, that Louis XVI died on the guillotine.

There are men who cannot be candid! They would even be afraid to commit themselves by declaring that castor-oil is a laxative.

There are limits to skepticism and incredulity. Quibbling and the sophistries of the subtlest dialectic do not affect the existence of facts.

On the other hand, one hears objections, now and again, that the extraordinary narrations the value and the scope of which we are discussing here, are brought to our notice by plain people rather than by savants accustomed to the rigor of experimental methods. What is there to surprise us in this? Do not plain, ignorant men make up the vast majority of mankind? Can we find one scientific mind in a thousand? If so, there would be forty thousand such minds in France, and one million six hundred thousand in the whole world. Let us admit it: there are few thinkers among the human race; men in trade vastly predominate. Well, is not this ratio quite comparable to that of proved psychic phenomena?

Unfortunately, as a general thing, people of the upper classes — savants, scholars, artists, writers, judges, priests, physicians, etc. — maintain a discreet reserve, as though afraid to speak out. They are less free, have their own interests to protect, and are silent while others talk. Such faint heartedness, such cowardice, is absolutely despicable. What is there to fear? It is excusable to deny facts through ignorance. But not to dare admit things seen

— a sad state of affairs!

There are other criminals besides those in prisons, namely, cultivated men who know truths they do not venture to reveal, for reasons of personal interest, or for fear of ridicule. In the course of my career I have met more than one of these “men of science,” extremely intelligent, very learned, who have been witnesses of metaphysical phenomena beyond cavil, or who have grown aware of them, — men who have no doubt of the undeniable existence of these phenomena, yet dare say nothing, through meanness unpardonable in minds of real worth. Or else, from fear of being heard, they whisper, mysteriously, testimony which would be of considerable weight in the triumph of truth.

Such men are unworthy of the name of savants. Several of them belong to what is called “high society,” and believe that they would lose credit by seeming over-credulous, although, on the other hand, they subscribe to debatable beliefs. I might give here the name of a member of the Institute, a member who is of real value to science, who might serve as a competent witness to the metaphysical phenomena treated in this work, but who neither wishes nor ventures to admit aught, because he is an avowed Catholic, and his adviser in matters of conscience has told him that the domain of these questions lies within the authority of the Church alone.

A part of the clergy is hostile to this sort of investigation, and considers that the Church should monopolize such questions. This point of view has come down from biblical times. The summoning of the dead was formally forbidden the Hebrews, and Saul violated his own decrees when he went to consult the witch of Endor and invoked the shade of the prophet Samuel. Perhaps this interdiction was justifiable in the case of incompetent men of the humbler orders, who can so easily fall into the worst stupidities. But in our day to forbid men who are learned, given to reflection, well balanced, to study these problems; to teach them that they are not to use the reason God has given them, that they must humble this reason before the affirmations of a debatable divine revelation; to maintain that the question of the nature of the soul and of its survival, which interests so personally each one of us, must be reserved to a caste of casuists who appropriate for themselves the right to judge and to decide between the true and the false, between God and the devil — such is, indeed, a strange way of thinking, and an anachronism carrying us back to the middle ages. What crimes the Inquisition committed in its numberless trials for sorcery! There is in the ideas that yet dominate a certain class of men and women, a menacing error, extremely baneful in the search for truth.

This error is all the more inexplicable from the fact that the phenomena with which we are concerned support the stories of the sacred Scriptures, among others the apparitions of Jesus, unknown or denied by nine tenths of mankind.

This unpardonable aberration recalls to astronomers the prohibition made in the eighteenth century (January 21, 1759) by Delisle, the head of the naval observatory. He forbade his assistant Messier to reveal the discovery which he had just made of the return of Halley’s Comet. This scandal in the annals of science prevented a demonstration of the truth of Newton’s theories of attraction.

To forbid the revealing of facts useful in the progress of human knowledge! Is that not a real crime?

It is nevertheless indisputable that a certain number of witnesses of the phenomena with which we are here concerned remain obstinately dumb as to their personal experiences. Some obey a word of command, others fear the sarcasm of neighbors, still others fancy that they would compromise their dignity; many are simply cowardly, or culpably indifferent.

Without doubt, we may acknowledge the fact that men in official positions are usually not independent. It may be that to attain to these positions they have been particularly yielding toward their superiors, fearful of causing the least alarm, and egotistical enough never to lose sight of their small personal interests, which they put above everything. It may be that, having attained to these positions, they are unwilling to endanger them by the least defiance of conventional ideas, — sacrificing all to these interests, even, at times, their own convictions. Or, finally, it may be that the human comedy glorified by Balzac, and the hypocrisy pilloried by Molière hold sway over a greater area than honest and ingenuous men suppose. Whatever the truth of the matter, dominant conventional motives stifle all liberty.

No rule is without exceptions. There are independent persons in official places. On the other hand, we freely admit that in certain circumstances silence is necessary, — cases of deep and painful family grief, tragic deaths, critical situations, personal sorrows that no indiscretion has a right to wound. These special cases are emphatically to be respected. But when people, without sufficient cause, lack the courage to affix their signatures to a scientific observation of importance, lack the courage to tell in what spot the observation was made, give only the

initials of the town, sign X or Y instead of an honorable name—this lessens the value of the observation related. In certain cases, it is only fair that I be asked not to make the names public; but why should there be anonymous relations?

The objection pointed out above is groundless, — namely, that these accounts of anomalous and extraordinary facts (premonitions, warnings of death, apparitions, etc.) are for the most part submitted by an indiscriminate lot of people, and not by men of science of great personal worth. In the first place, a simple observation often suffices to establish the truth of a fact, such as, for example, the fall of a meteorite, a thunderclap, an earthquake. On the other hand, as we pointed out above, the proportion is much the same with regard to the accounts in question as it is with regard to the level of general intelligence. There are men of worth among the observers: the names of Immanuel Kant, of Goethe, of Schopenhauer, of William Crookes, of Russel Wallace, of Oliver Lodge, of Edison, of Victor Hugo, of Victorien Sardou, of Lombroso, of William James, and of some others, are not negligible; there are observers of all sorts.

Objections based on the uncertainty of human testimony are, it seems to me, entirely eliminated by the preceding arguments. We can, we must, admit that these facts are real, sufficiently proved, beyond refutation, after we have taken into account all possible errors, of whatever nature, including deception; this last has been more fully investigated by me than by any of those who dissent. Let us turn, now, to a fundamental discussion of explanatory hypothesis, that we may throw a clear light on our convictions as to the intrinsic faculties of the soul, and its existence, independent of the body.

Could not these phenomena, which seem so extraordinary, have a physical origin? Could not all these manifestations of unknown forces, several of which seem attributable to a mind distinct from our organisms, or even, at times, to minds exterior to us — could they not originate in our own brains? Does man know himself?

No, he does not; he has not gauged the reservoir of energies, of unknown forces of his being. Biology halts at the surface, at evident manifestations, and physiologists admit that they have analyzed but incompletely certain of the mechanisms of the human machine; in particular, those which have to do with the functioning of the nervous centers.

When we review the discoveries due to creative genius — the invention of the telescope, of the microscope, of steam-driven machines, of the applications of electricity of terrestrial and astronomical photography, of spectral analysis, of aerial navigation, of the electric telegraph, of the telephone, of radiography, of the phonograph, of the cinematograph, of wireless telegraphy, etc. — we cannot help admiring the power of the human mind, cannot help thinking that its faculties have not yet been fully explored.

Very recently (May, 1920) I was listening at the detector of a wireless-telegraph receiving station at Juvisy, to the successive, dry, rapid cracking sounds produced by the electric discharges of a distant storm. Suddenly a beautiful melody took the place of these monotonous sounds; at first a piano sonata, then a whole orchestra charmed my ears. No musical instrument was being played near me: it was a celestial concert, recalling the smooth harmonies of the music of biblical angels; the musicians were in *London*, at a wireless-telephone transmitting station, and the audience in *Rome*, at a listening-post! So this concert from the other side of the English Channel was wafted far beyond France, destined for the Eternal City.

If our ears were gifted with the peculiar properties of the receiving apparatus of a wireless-telephone station, we should hear these voices from space, this ethereal music which makes itself heard at a distance of hundreds of thousands of kilometers. If our eyes were constructed as is a photographic plate, we should see radiations to which our optic nerves remain insensitive. For us the world would be quite another place. If we were all of us gifted with the supernormal faculties especially developed in certain beings, all of the unknown forces with which we are here concerned would seem natural, and we should have a different conception of the universe and of life.

These considerations lead us to think that we live in the center of an invisible world, into which we are plunged like the blind in bright sunshine, or the deaf whose ears cannot perceive the harmonies of a Beethoven or a Mozart: the blind man's lack of vision does not stop the sun from shining, any more than the infirmity of the deaf changes in any way the beauty of a symphony. In consequence of having verified this onward march of science, we cannot help seeing its continuation into the future. If, for example, it is proved that a dying man in the United States or in China reveals his death to a friend living in France or in England, or that someone dead comes to tell us under what conditions he passed from life to death, we cannot help musing upon the gradual evolution of human knowledge, cannot help asking ourselves to what point will extend, in the future, the mental conquests of the

dweller upon this Earth.

How far will man go in his progress?

Have we not succeeded, not only in speaking at a distance, but in writing, in drawing, in sending a portrait?

When my book "La Fin du Monde" (1893) was published, a few critics, ignorant of our researches, classed as purely imaginary the illustrations on pages 273, 307, and 367, the first of which shows a man living in Paris, seeing, from his bed and by means of an improvised motion-picture apparatus, a dancing-girl dancing in Ceylon; the second, an apparition made by the transmission of waves in the ether; the third, Omégar going to the feet of Eva, who had summoned him across the immensity of the ocean. Such progress was effected gradually, just as was the evolution of the airships I have mentioned. All things come to him who waits.

In view of the power of the human mind, one might, then, maintain that the transcendental facts that are the objects of our metaphysical investigations might be due in part to faculties of the mind as yet unknown. Let us consider the objection closely, without a single preconceived idea.

The question presents itself with clarity: can the facts observed be attributed to known or unknown faculties of a cerebral mechanism as powerful as we choose to assume? Let us analyze, examine carefully, one of the examples given in our first volume, chosen at random, — let us say that of page 270:

On June 27, 1894, at about nine o'clock in the morning, Dr. Gallet, then a student of medicine in Lyons, was studying in his room, in company with a fellow-student, Dr. Varay, for the first examination for the degree of doctor, and was very much absorbed in his work, when he was irresistibly distracted from it by a sentence that obsessed him, the repetition, in his inner consciousness, of the words, "Monsieur Casimir Perier was elected President of the republic by four hundred and fifty-one votes."

The student wrote this sentence upon a sheet of paper which he handed to his companion, complaining of the obsession. Varay read it, shrugged his shoulders, and when his friend insisted that he believed it to be a real premonition, asked him, harshly enough, to let him work undisturbed.

After lunch the two comrades met two other students, Monsieur Bouchet, now a physician in Haute-Savoie, and Monsieur Deborne, now a pharmacist at Thonon, and the three companions laughed at such a prophecy, since the official candidates for the presidency were Messieurs Brisson and Dupuy.

That day the election was held at Versailles, at two o'clock.

Presently, while the students from Lyons were refreshing themselves upon the terrace of a café, newsboys passed, and shouted: "Monsieur Casimir Perier elected President of the republic by four hundred and fifty-one votes!"

It would be ill-advised for the most hardened skeptics to contest this fact of exact premonition, five hours before the actual event, since it was confirmed by the triple attestation of three witnesses. (Page 271)

That this was only a chance coincidence is inadmissible. If it were a question of an arithmetical calculation, one might say that there is nothing marvelous in its being exact, just as in the calculation of the number of grains of wheat contained in a liter, but we are here concerned with a spontaneous inner voice. And the figures!

The question that arises is whether we may attribute this divination of the future to the brain, to physiological cerebral faculties, or are not impelled to seek, in Man or else where, the functioning of a psychic element differing from the material organism.

Does not this question answer itself?

It is purely hypothetical to attribute to a grouping of material molecules, to chemical or mechanical action, to a swirling of atoms of any sort, the faculty of seeing that which does not yet exist, that which will happen in several hours, several days, several weeks, several months or several years.

The hypothesis rests upon no scientific basis. Further more, it is absurd in itself. By virtue of wishing to set up a practical science, we slip into aberration, we cease to reason logically.

The only quibble, in the case of the premonition that we have just related, would be the supposition of a chance coincidence, (1) as to the unlooked-for name; (2) as to the number. Strictly speaking, although the chances are a million to one against this, it is, perhaps, not absolutely impossible.

But, then, take the incident related just after the one given above, — Monsieur Vincent Sassaroli predicting several days in advance the collapse of a house that architects thought extremely substantial and inducing the inmates to leave it just before the catastrophe. In this case, assuredly, the prediction cannot be laid to chance. Another hypothesis will be sought: it will be conjectured that the prophet was gifted with the faculty of animals which have a presentiment of earth quakes; but this hypothesis is untenable; it is not a question of a cosmic phenomenon, but of a particular piece of property. Those who contradict, from preconceived convictions, wish to bring forward improbable hypothesis rather than admit the simple reality.

And Schopenhauer's maid-servant, seeing in dream five or six hours in advance, the overturned inkstand and the ink running from the desk to the floor? To attribute this premonitory vision to the brain of the philosopher's servant — is that not the height of folly?

And the Edinburgh child, a charming little romper, suddenly seeing himself in a coffin lined with white satin, flowers all about him, — a scene that occurred eight days afterward? And the young Princess Radziwill, always refusing, from childhood, to pass through a certain drawing-room doorway, under which she was crushed at her betrothal-fête?

And Mademoiselle Noell of Montpellier, appearing to her brother the day after her death and telling him of it? My readers have read this dramatic story in "L'Inconnu," and we will return to it later.

Even in the case of Madame Constans, who refused obstinately to take the potion which would have killed her, — a case in which we might fancy a mysterious divination on the part of the human organism, — in this case, too, we feel that there is a subliminal cause.

And a hundred other observations of the same sort!

Presentiments are at times characterized by a precision that certain psychologists think the human soul incapable of attaining, — the soul reduced to its own faculties alone; they think it necessary to assume the intervention of a spirit exterior to the soul. These analysts push the consequences of spiritualism still farther than we have done, so far.

The brain comes into play, yes, but it is only the tool. A locomotive would not run without the engineer. The electric apparatus is not the telegraph operator. The telephone is not the person speaking over it. The dark-room is not the photograph.

There is yet another aspect of Man, of which we have not spoken, and which we do not have to discuss here, — his moral nature. How could combinations of chemical molecules produce benevolence, devotion, the love of rectitude, honesty, probity, goodness, the spirit of sacrifice and of justice, the passion for truth, and all the spiritual faculties which make up the moral domain of humanity? The faculties of the soul are as varied as are individuals; but all souls have this in common: a conscience to condemn evil and approve goodness. Besides the *mental* aspect of the human soul, there is the *moral* aspect, which is its very core. How can we see in this a function of cerebral matter?

No, Man is not merely a physical organism, as physiologists have taught till now. He is more complex. What is the sum total of him? That is what we are seeking in this research.

Nevertheless there are men, reputedly scientific, who will not loosen their grip, will not accept our conclusions, however logical they be, in any circumstances. Theirs is a systematic denial deplorable in well-balanced minds. For every observer who thinks freely, the strictest positive method establishes, with certainty, that the supernormal facts investigated in this work can no longer be denied, must from now on be admitted into the realm of the exact sciences, must be augmented and transformed; they are not attributable to cerebral functions; they prove the existence of the soul as an entity distinct from the bodily organism.

A rigorous scientific procedure is indispensable to put psychic investigation on a positive foundation, and to fit it into the framework of modern science, constantly enlarged by the new discoveries which, in a quarter of a century, have transformed the world. But when occurrences so long discussed — and even denied — have been authenticated, one can not explain the persistence of a skepticism which refuses to acknowledge them. Is obdurate systematic denial reasonable?

To believe in everything is an error. To believe in nothing is also an error. We must admit nothing without proofs, but must acknowledge with fairness that which is proved.

Let us admit, nevertheless, that there are temperaments so recalcitrant to the special research that occupies us here, that, notwithstanding all imaginable proofs, they will never believe anything.

We meet often enough, about us, men incapable of being convinced, despite the most evident proofs; worthy men, moreover, from other points of view, learned, agreeable, philanthropic, but whose mental eyes are constructed in such a way that they do not see straight before them. (Hunters tell us it is the same with hares.) Their eyes have a prism before the retina in place of the normal lens, and this prism distorts the rays by a few degrees, with refractions which differ according to type. This is not their fault. It is not only that they *do not wish* to perceive the sun at high noon, but they *cannot*. Various systems of education are opposed to such an acknowledgment, some because of blind credulity as to certain teachings not in the least proved, which satisfy them, others because of an incredulity not less blind. Charles du Prel tells, somewhere, that a preacher in Vienna pronounced from the pulpit these astounding words: "I will not believe in hypnotic suggestion until I have seen it, and I shall never see it, because it is a principle of mine never to be present at this sort of experiments."¹

What logic! What magnificent reasoning!

Eyes are useless to a blind brain, says an Arabian proverb.

Obdurate deniers, those who laugh at everything, do not guess what pleasure their dissertations give us. Among them we find humorists of distinction, and subtle talkers who fancy they are passing over a royal road dominated by their luxurious automobiles, while in reality they ride upon tires that a pebble can deflate. If I am positive as to the principles here laid down, it is because my certainty is absolute, firmly upheld by an impartial personal research carried on for more than half a century. The documents that I am making public represent only a minimum of those in my possession, and every day I receive new ones. Our first volume might be double, quadruple, ten times the size that it is, and the pages about to be read might also be multiplied by ten, to hold all. But, for all that, the blind and the deaf do not lose their blindness and their deafness. It is so distinguished to smile in a superior way at everything!

To have too much intellect is sometimes a hindrance to the simple comprehension of things as they are. To be sure, this reproach cannot be applied with any great frequency to our terrestrial human kind; but it is applicable from time to time to famous specimens of that same humanity. All those who have read Voltaire have been somewhat shocked by his ridiculous ideas as to fossils, by his irreverent poem about the Maid of Orleans, and by his unseemly jokes upon the most solemn subjects. Too much intellect, certainly: "*Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.*" A telescope held to the eye would be a bad instrument in the writing of a letter. A microscope, in place of the telescope, would be equally bad in the judging of a landscape. The well-known proverb "Some one is wiser than Voltaire: every one," is not fallacious. Simple good sense must not always be disdained.

Did not the illustrious savant Henri Poincaré, in the quintessence of his metaphysical reasoning, give us to understand one day that he doubted the movement of the earth? One does not forget a literary and scientific scandal of this sort.

Reactionary writers hastened to adduce arguments. Edouard Drumont, at their head, wrote in "La Libre Parole" (January 9, 1904):

It has not been proved, at all, that the earth rotates, as Galileo contended, or that it is not the center of the planetary system. Monsieur H. Poincaré, who is at present the foremost among French geometrical physicists, speaks in no positive tone. He says: "It is maintained that the earth rotates, and I, for my part, see no disadvantage in that assumption. It is a pleasing and convenient hypothesis to explain the formation and evolution of worlds, — one that can be neither confirmed nor discredited by any tangible proof. Absolute space, that is to say the guiding-point with which the earth would have to be compared in order to know if, in reality, it rotates, has no objective existence. Therefore, there is no sense in the statement 'The earth rotates,' since we can verify it by no experiment. These two statements, 'The earth rotates,' and 'It is more convenient to assume that the earth rotates,' have one and the same meaning; there is no more in one than in the other.

A great many newspapers straddled the Pegasus lassoed by Drumont: "L'Eclair," "Liberté," etc., in Paris, and a large number of provincial newspapers, without counting the "Croix" of all the dioceses. We read in the "Croix du Nord" of February 22d: "*Those who affirm that the earth rotates know nothing about it. They say the earth rotates because they think this irritates Catholics greatly.*"

A rising in arms such as this was an old enough phenomenon in the fourth year of our twentieth century!

¹ *La Magie*, science naturelle, II, 327.

I have often described, in my works, the fourteen principal movements of the earth, and this is not the place to explain them. Nevertheless, ignorant and sectarian men answer: There are not fourteen; there are none at all, — neither rotation in twenty-four hours, nor revolution about the sun in three hundred and sixty-five days, nor movement toward the constellation of Hercules, nor secular oscillation of the pole — nothing.

Nevertheless, all may convince themselves, for example, of the first of these movements; that of the daily rotation to which we owe the succession of days and nights, by a reasoning so simple that it is childish, which we can sum up in a few lines:

No one can deny that we see every day, the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars rise in the east, climb the heavens, reach their point of culmination, sink, set in the west, and reappear on the eastern horizon the next day, after having passed under the earth.

There are only two possible hypotheses by which to explain this universal and perpetual observation: either the sky turns from the east to the west, or our globe turns upon itself in the opposite direction.

In the first case we must assume that the heavenly bodies move at a speed in proportion to their distance.

The sun, for example, is at a distance from us of twenty-three thousand times the half-diameter of the earth; it would thus, in twenty-four hours, have to pass over a circumference twenty-three thousand times greater than that of the equator, which would mean a speed of 10,695 kilometers a second.

Jupiter is about five times that distance away; its speed would have to be 53,000 kilometers a second.

Neptune, thirty times farther away, would have to travel 320,000 kilometers a second.

The nearest star, Alpha Centauri, at a distance two hundred and seventy-five thousand times that of the sun, would have to speed, to fly through space at a rate of 2,941,000,000 kilometers a second.

All the other stars are incomparably farther away — to infinity. And this fantastic revolution would have to take place about a tiny point, about our terrestrial atom, more than a million times smaller than the sun and lost to sight in an immensity of worlds!

To state the problem thus, is to solve it. Unless we deny the most concordant astronomical measurement and geometrical calculations, the daily rotation of the earth is a *certainty*.

To assume that the heavenly bodies turn around our globe is to assume, as a humorist put it, that to roast a pheasant one would have to turn the fireplace around it, — the kitchen, the house, and the whole country!

Moreover, Foucault's pendulum shows this movement, and the flattening of the poles proves it.

Despite this certainty, we see writers still proclaiming in explicable doubts.

To such a point did this go that in 1917 Monsieur Capus, Poincaré's successor in the Académie Française, uttered the following words in the speech delivered at his reception:

We now see that, four centuries after Copernicus, a man of great learning remarks that there exists nowhere in space an observation-post from within which one might observe whether the earth really rotates and that, in consequence, the statement 'The earth rotates,' has no meaning, since no experiment will ever enable it to be verified. But the discovery of Copernicus may be summed up in these words: It is more convenient to assume that the earth rotates, because in this way we express laws of astronomy in simpler language.

And farther on:

The sun long let us believe that it was he who rose on the horizon; then suggested that it was, perhaps, the earth that turned weakly toward him, but in both these hypothesis he has not measured for us either his light or his heat. Let us accept, then, as the condition upon which our destiny depends, approximate truth and the approximations of observation.

These words, proclaimed under the dome of the Institute, and worthy, rather, of a scene in vaudeville, astound us; they would have confused more than one mind if they had been taken seriously.

The rotation of the earth has been proved up to the hilt; to deny it would be to deny all astronomy and all astronomical mathematics.

We see the other planets rotate, as the earth does, — Mars in twenty-four hours and thirty-seven minutes, Jupiter in nine hours and fifty minutes, Saturn in ten hours and four teen minutes. An observer on the moon would see our globe performing its daily rotation; and so on.

Poincaré had delivered upon this subject only a metaphysical dissertation as to the “relativity of motion”; personally, he greatly regretted the comments with which a section of the press lent flavor to a dissertation that were, really, amusing.

I tried to destroy this myth, and the illustrious astronomer had invited this very thing by the following explanatory letter, published in the “Bulletin de la Société Astronomique de France,” of May, 1904:

My Dear Colleague:

I am beginning to be rather exasperated by all the noise a section of the press is making about sentences taken from one of my works, — and the ridiculous opinions these newspapers attribute to me.

The articles from which those sentences were borrowed appeared in a metaphysical review; in them I spoke a language well understood by constant readers of that review.

That article most often quoted was written in the course of a controversy with Monsieur Le Roy, the principal incident of which was a discussion in the Société philosophique de France. Monsieur Le Roy had said: “A scientific fact is *created* by the savant.” And he had been asked: “Be more exact: what do you mean by a fact?” “A fact,” he had answered, “is, for example, the rotation of the earth.” And then the reply came: “No, a fact, by definition, is something that can be proved by a direct experiment; it is the *crude* result of this experiment. For this reason, the rotation of the earth is not a fact.”

When I said, “These two sentences, ‘The earth rotates,’ and ‘It is more convenient to assume that the earth rotates,’ have one and the same meaning,” I spoke the language of modern metaphysics. In the same language one says, offhand: “The two sentences ‘The exterior world exists,’ and ‘It is convenient to assume that the exterior world exists,’ have one and the same meaning.

Thus, the rotation of the earth is certain in the same degree as is the existence of external objects.

I think there is reassurance in this for those who might have been frightened by unusual words. As for the conclusions that people have wished to draw, it is useless to show how absurd they are. What I have said would not have justified the persecution of Galileo, first, because even error should never be persecuted, next because, even from a metaphysical point of view, it is not *false* that the earth rotates; thus Galileo cannot have made a mistake.

This does not mean, either, that one may teach with impunity that the earth does not rotate, for the reason, if for none other, that a belief in this rotation is a means as indispensable for him who wishes to think learnedly as is the railroad, for example, to him who wishes to travel speedily.

As for the proofs of this rotation, they are too well known for me to dwell on them. If the earth did not rotate, we should have to admit that the stars describe in twenty-four hours an immense circumference which light would take centuries to traverse.

Now, those who look upon metaphysics as out of date since Auguste Comte will tell me that there can be no modern metaphysics. But the denial of all metaphysics is in itself metaphysical, and it is precisely that view that I call modern metaphysics.

Forgive this chatter.

Yours sincerely,

Poincaré

I admit, however, that this letter had not absolutely satisfied me. The skepticism of the philosopher persists in it, and it is in contradiction to the certainty we must have as to the proofs of modern astronomy. Poincaré believed, with Berkeley, that we are sure of nothing, not even of the existence of the earth, of the sun, and of the world outside our thought, which alone might be said to exist.

I have often had long discussions with him on this point. And this is what made me say, above, that one may prefer simple good sense to the quintessence of intellect.

All we ask is that people simply acknowledge reality ascertained through experience. That they reason calmly. That they let themselves be duped by nothing, — neither by illusion, nor by any sophistry. That they see the sun at noon. That they investigate all sincerely, frankly, honestly, conscientiously.

After all, why bother with those who are indifferent, with deniers, with the incredulous? There is the desire to convince. There is the apostleship of truth. There is the happiness of being useful, of doing good, of consoling those who suffer, of spreading about one the rays of hope. But those who are satisfied, either by their certainty of tranquil nothingness after death, or by their belief in dogmas which suffice for their mentality, need seek no further. Every sincere conviction must be respected. Freedom of conscience above all, whether that conscience be that of a

Christian, a Jew, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, a Taoist, a theosophist, an atheist, it matters little. Every man for himself. But since one's manner of life differs greatly according as one admits, or does not admit, an after life, and an innate sense of justice as to our actions, he who knows that the soul exists, and that it survives the body, considers it a duty to be helpful to his fellow-men.

It is, however, only fair to note that incredulity found, at times, certain more or less solid props in analytical discussions of psychic phenomena.

We cannot, indeed, admit these extraordinary facts with out encountering difficulties and objections of various kinds. These difficulties cannot be disposed of by hiding our eyes like the ostrich.

Thus, for example, in the case of a mind that sees into the distance, into a closed suite of rooms, into a sealed envelop, and even into the future, these faculties make us ask ourselves why beings so gifted are not the masters of the world. Why can they not manipulate all financial quotations, learn the state secrets which go from one end of the world to the other, sealed in diplomats' hand-bags? Why can they not, without scouts or airplanes, perceive the movements of troops in a war and know in advance the outcome of battles of the Marne, discover camouflaged artillery shelters and destructive submarines, and even prevent wars by learning the plans devised by rulers? Why can they not tell us where, in the bowels of the Earth, we may find carbon, minerals, and the petroleum we need? That is what a reader of the first volume wrote me recently, adding: "I have the great happiness of being a thoroughgoing spiritualist and of thinking precisely as you do, but I also believe, with you, that we must give way before no problem and that there is nothing in the world more interesting than the search for truth."

The answer to these very logical objections is that the faculties of which we speak are not brought into play normally, by our will, but under special indeterminate conditions, and for the most part *spontaneously*. They are a sort of inspiration, of hypnotic condition. They may be compared to musical creation. Could Beethoven have written by command any one of his splendid symphonies? It is the same with poets. Can you see a general ordering Beethoven to dream his "Moonlight Sonata," or Dante his "Vision of Paradise"? They are up rushes of the imagination, creations of the mind. Rouget de Lisle wrote of the "Marseillaise," "The words came to me with the melody." Occasionally poems have been ordered for official ceremonies; the results were such as Rostand's poem, written for the reception of the Empress of Russia at the palace of Compiègne, when the carpet upon which she was walking cried out suddenly:

"Oh! Oh! It is an empress!"

What an indiscreet carpet! And what astonishment on the part of the empress! It seems to me that this academician was not much better inspired than Henri Poincaré's successor.

These supernormal faculties are not at our bidding. They function without our knowledge. A person who sees the future does not know he is seeing it. He sees a present which he does not believe real. When the event comes to pass, he verifies the premonition, the inner vision. On the other hand, this foreknowledge occurs but rarely in the lives of even the best-qualified percipients, usually but once.

Even though indisputable, the phenomenon of vision with out eyes and that of knowledge of the future is a super normal phenomenon. It is the unconscious at work. We do not know the laws of this action.

Hypnotists have often obtained views of things at a distance, views remarkably well defined, through their somnambulists, but we cannot always trust this method. At times there comes into play the influence of external minds, as in spiritualistic manifestations. I have before me, at this very moment, a hundred cases of this sort, inexplicable enough. The oddest, perhaps, is that related by Maxwell, as to the statuette whose place was taken by a spirit, which for several months influenced the behavior of the trusting and astounded observer, and ended by ruining him at the time of the war of 1870; it had not foreseen the consequences of the war on the stock-exchange, although up to that time all its information and predictions had been perfectly exact.

In short, we must apply to metaphysical research the same rational rules we apply to all branches of science, and good common sense must, from this time on, banish the incredulity so long opposed to the admission of the best-established facts.

If I have rather dwelt on the argument as to the movement of the Earth, as an example of unwarranted hesitancy, I did so for the reason that a knowledge of the position of our planet in the universe constitutes the very foundation of all science, and because it was necessary to form an estimate of the great disadvantage, from a philosophical point of view, of doubts without good reason, fatal in the search for truth.

An objection very different from the preceding ones was made to me with regard to our first volume. A lady, who asks me not to give her name, sent me from a château near Mans a long and interesting letter, voicing her regrets as to what I had said about Lourdes and about the apparition of the Holy Virgin, which she considers authentic. Other letters of like nature were written me, one, notably, by an eminent canon of the diocese of Marseilles.

If I have spoken of the healing in Lourdes, it is because *it proves the existence of the soul*, the power of ideas, of mental exaltation, of faith. But it would be a mistake to think that the Catholic Church has a monopoly of such cases. There are *many others of the same sort* which are not in the least connected with Notre-Dame de Lourdes or de la Salette, and which are not Catholic at all.²

This work was not written for religious establishments, nor for convinced and well-contented believers in any religion, but for men who think freely, desirous of judging things in complete independence of mind. Now, is it reasonable to believe that the mother of Jesus Christ concerns herself with the cures at Lourdes; or Æsculapius himself with those of the temple of Epidaurus? We may challenge the associating of Madame P — with Bernadette's vision, despite the local anecdote which was at once related in the region; we may admit only an hallucination without objective cause, but to assume any direct action on the part of the Virgin Mary would, indeed, seem altogether extravagant.³

Do not *religions* (there are about fifty on our little globe) often seem a parody of *religion*? How can we refuse to admit the existence of a universal Spirit ruling all things, atoms as well as worlds, the smallest plant, the smallest animal, as magisterially as the planets of the solar system, the formation of nebulas, the millions of suns of the Milky Way? Religion, the belief in an infinite God, to us *unknowable*, imposes itself upon every thinking mind.

It may be answered that religions are the diverse forms of this general belief in a supreme Being, that these forms are comprehensible, that they are helpful to weak minds, to the lazy, to those who have neither the strength nor the will to think; helpful to those who find an easy guide to conduct in dogmatic formulas forbidding all research and insisting on passive submission to mystery, without any attempt to lift the veil from it, for that would be profanation.

But will not religions some day give place to the religion? Will they not move toward perfection, — those of China as well as those of Europe?

Is humanity, then, incapable of producing a rational belief? Are illusions and superstitions therefore indispensable?

No one can deny that the various forms of religion are useful from a sociological point of view, that they

² The discussion of this special subject resulted in a new investigation, made for me in August, 1920, by devoted friends, and I have been led to modify the text of pages 148-150 of the first editions of Vol. I (beginning with the thirty-fifth thousand). Two natives of Lourdes, whose memories are still excellent and who were living at the time of the apparitions, a certain Monsieur B——, now aged ninety, and his wife, well remembered the beautiful Madame P——, her amorous adventures, her silk dresses, and the *bons mots* current at that time as to Bernadette's visions. But the local myth does not seem to me as well established as it appeared to be. This investigation revealed the fact that Madame P—— gave birth to a child, a girl, on February 8, 1858. Could she have taken a walk on the eleventh? On that day the weather was cloudy and serene. The following Sunday (the date of the second apparition) there was brilliant sunshine, fine weather, — a beautiful spring day. It is worthy of remark, however, that on the first day the apparition did not speak, and that on the following Sunday it spoke more or less at length, as on Thursday, the eighteenth.

It seems that Bernadette was asked if the Holy Virgin were more beautiful than Madame P—— and that she answered that she was still more beautiful. (Letter 4256 of Aug. 31, 1920) * Lasserre alludes to this question in his work on Lourdes (p. 33, edition of 1892, three hundred and nineteenth thousand), which I have before me. The grotto at that time was hardly accessible except from above, by a mountain path, that which Bernadette took at the time of the third apparition.

On this same subject of Lourdes a letter (4159) had been sent me from Lourdes itself, on June 11, 1920, by a native, asking me to admit that little innocent Bernadette was simply the victim of an hallucination, without connecting it with a single amorous stroll of Madame P——. Nevertheless G——, an officer, the friend of Madame F——, was all his life as dumbfounded by this association as he was convinced of it. I also got a letter stating: "Bernadette was not an idiot, but simply feeble-minded." Lasserre, an enthusiastic believer, declares, nevertheless, that she was an extremely timid creature; that at fourteen she seemed only eleven or twelve; that she knew neither how to read nor how to write, had been unable to take her first communion, knew only the dialect of the Pyrenees, and was, moreover, subject to periods of asthmatic oppression, which caused her great suffering. She had spent her childhood herding sheep.

But are these various details worth the time we might spend in discussing them, since typical hallucinations occur without objective causes?

*I wish, to remind the reader that the letters sent to me, containing psychic observations, have been numbered, in succession, since the year 1899, so recourse may always be had to the originals.

³ Gustave Droz's book "Autour d'une Source" gives an artistic version of the visual hallucinations of the seer of Lourdes and of the exploitation of the spring.

teach principles of honesty, that they are the spiritual consolers of wretchedness, of those unjustly treated, of grief. But why do certain believers think they should not be enlightened? Why the religious intolerance of certain sectarians, who forbid and condemn free research, and who will not admit that one may reason in a manner different from theirs? In the twentieth century can one think with the mind of the year one thousand? Must there be two religions, one for the learned—those capable of reflection, of discussion — another for the lower classes? Up to the present this distinction has seemed necessary. But now?

Is it not wise to get rid of dross?

Was not the clergy, at the time of Joan of Arc, wrong to declare her a sorceress, a heretic, and to cause this maid of nineteen to perish infamously at the stake?

Was not Galileo condemned as a heretic? Et cetera, et cetera. Why not admit progress in ideas?

Let us not dwell on these things. This is not the place. All thinking men have passed through the tortures of doubt, of uncertainty, that follow the serenity of childish faith. The founder, in England, of experimental psychic research, Frederic Myers, has in his Memoirs let us hear the echo of a crisis such as I have spoken of. He tells this concerning the evolution of his thought:

Brought up in the Anglican Church, he was a faithful member of it, uncompromising, indeed, — “aggressively orthodox,” to use his own words, — until the age of inevitable crises, when, torn on the one hand by an irrepressible need of certainty as to the Beyond, his faith in traditional dogmas, and on the other by philosophical speculations, he went to confide his perplexities to Professor Sidgwick.

During a walk under the starry sky that I shall never forget, I asked him, almost trembling, if he thought that after the failure of tradition, of intuition, and of metaphysics, to solve the enigma of the universe, there was yet a chance that the investigation of certain actual and observable phenomena — ghosts, spirits, no matter what — might furnish us valuable knowledge relative to the invisible world. Sidgwick seemed to me to have already considered this possibility, and, with assurance, pointed out some reasons for hope. From that evening dates my resolution to give myself up to this investigation.⁴

This was on December 3, 1869; Myers was twenty-six years old. From that time on, the goal of his life was fixed.

All of us have gone through that. But the road to Damascus is not the same for all.

An eminent historian, a famous contemporaneous author, wrote me one day:

My dear friend, why concern yourself with the beliefs of the common people? You know as well as I that they are founded upon no reality. You know as well as I that Adam and Eve never existed; that the flood is an exaggerated account of a local inundation that the waters never rose to the height of Mount Ararat, that it was the mountains that rose. You know as well as I that Jesus Christ cannot have sent demons into a herd of swine, which are supposed to have cast themselves into the sea. You know as well as I that Pope Alexander VI and Cardinal Dubois, archbishop under the Regency, were atheists, and that the anticlerical Voltaire was the most convinced of deists, etc. Then leave these believers undisturbed in their illusions. Why make enemies for yourself, when you are seeking only the progress of general education?

The advice was, doubtless, dictated by sincere friendship. But would it be possible to study the problem of death with out touching upon religious beliefs? No, it is impossible, this problem being the very basis of religion. Let us respect beliefs, illusions, but let us irradiate them with new light. The world goes on. *Ad veritatem per scientiam!*

Independent seekers have before them two kinds of adversaries, believers at one extreme, materialists at the other. While writing these lines, I received a long and learned dissertation from my illustrious friend Camille Saint-Saëns, discussing my arguments with the conviction that all spiritualists are in error and will discover nothing. He wrote, amiably:

Pardon me, but despite all your reasoning, despite your great authority, due to your exceptional worth, and your intelligence beyond comparison, I do not believe in the soul. As for God, when one sees what is happening...

The hope of convincing every one is, I admit, utopian.

Camille Saint-Saëns is, assuredly, one of the great minds of our century. He is learned in all things; in particular, astronomy, the history of religions, telepathy, premonitions and psychic sensations, and even cites the following fact from his personal experience:

⁴ See *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, 1904, p. 39.

When, for the first time, I made application as a candidate for the Académie des Beaux-Arts, I was not nominated. This rather provoked me, and I told myself mentally, looking at the Egyptian lions that adorn, in such bizarre fashion, the façade of the Institute: "I shall present myself again *when the lions turn around.*"

Some time afterward *the lions were turned!*

I answered Saint-Saëns:

You are the most delightful of friends, the mightiest of musicians, the glory of the Institute, one of the profound thinkers of our era, but *you are not logical.* How could any collection whatsoever of chemical molecules beneath your skull have been able to "secrete" this bizarre premonition? An *idea* cannot be produced by a material mechanism. Your mind saw an aspect of the future, without suspecting it.

And I find my illustrious friend all the more illogical for this reason: besides the premonition of which we have spoken, and which, moreover, was only a freak, but a freak of the mind, he has experienced other manifestations of a kind essentially psychic, for he also wrote me:

I, personally, have known cases of telepathy, of prescience of the future. I will cite some of them for you:

In the far-off days when I lived in the upper part of the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, I worked hard. When I was up to my ears in work, I suddenly thought of a lady of my acquaintance. Some moments afterward — the time it would take to pass through the courtyard and go up the stairs — some one rang: it was the lady of whom I had thought. The first few times I believed it chance; but the twentieth time! This phenomenon lasted several years.

In my youth, a painter, a friend of mine, showed me a picture he intended to submit for the annual Exposition. He had not yet exhibited his work, and did not know whether the picture would be accepted. Looking at it, I saw it in the first room of the Palais de l'Industrie, in a certain place at the top of the stairs. On the day the Salon opened I went there, and saw the picture placed as I had foreseen.

Did not the mind come into play here? How can we see, in this case, a property of matter? As my readers know, these psychic phenomena are of frequent occurrence.

To sum up this chapter, it seems to me that, taking into account all objections, all apparent difficulties, — taking humanity as it is, with its diversity of character, of perception, of intellect, and of interpretation, — we must acknowledge that Man is not merely a collection of material molecules, but is much more complex than standard physiology teaches, and that he has in himself a psychic element distinct from the physical, chemical, or mechanical organism.

The facts revealed in our first volume, as well as all those of like nature, prove beyond refutation the existence of the soul. All imaginable quibbling and hair-splitting, in the most varied discussions, cannot do away with the inevitable deductions. An observed fact is a fact. Whatever Henri Poincaré thinks of it, the movement of the earth is a fact. All the metaphysical dissertations in which one may lose oneself do not keep our globe from rotating, nor the innate faculties of the soul from proving its existence, quite apart from all that which may be normally attributed to a material physiological organism.

We have against us, in our investigation, three kinds of adversaries, virtually unconquerable: (1) Those that make sport of everything, who are interested in nothing; (2) materialists convinced, on principle, that matter produces every thing; (3) human beings confined within a narrow dogma, whatever their religion, sure of their beliefs and satisfied with them. Those with a knowledge of truth have always formed a minority, despite the most persevering efforts of free seekers.

Let us persevere, however. The good seed will, at length, germinate.

After all, each one of us is moving inevitably to his death, and each is free to think of death or not. It would seem, however, that reason should prevail.

Let us never despair of progress. The world goes on. Truth gradually triumphs. When, in 1887, I founded the Société Astronomique de France, the head of the Paris observatory, Admiral Mouchez, told me this was an endeavor without a future, in view of general indifference, on the one hand, and, on the other, the mutual personal rivalries of savants. There were only twelve of us at that founding. I myself did not suspect that the members would one day be numbered by thousands, that my successors in the presidency of that society would be the glory of the Institute, the official astronomers of the Board of Longitude, the heads of observatories, the highest authorities of the University of France: Faye, Tisserand, Janssen, Henri Poincaré, Deslandres, Pruisseux, Baillaud, the Count de la

Baume Pluvinel, Paul Appell, etc., and that the annual budget of this institution would, eventually, exceed a hundred thousand francs.

No, let us never despair of progress.

And let us be neither surprised nor saddened by divergences of opinion. Free and honest discussion is necessary for the triumph of truth.

We must now go a little more deeply into the faculties of Man.

The logical course of our investigations will bring us to the manifestations and apparitions of the dying and the dead. But there are apparitions of the living, intermediaries between the two worlds, which must first be verified.

A human being is made up of two distinct elements, the soul and the body. The body is visible and ponderable. The soul may manifest itself physically in phantasms of the living. What are these *phantasms*?



PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING

Know thyself.
The Delphic Oracle.

WE shall have to study, to examine, to discuss a great number of apparitions and manifestations of the dying, and we shall then come to apparitions and manifestations of the dead. Now, there are apparitions of the living which present themselves as a very natural introduction to the more complex investigations that are to follow. This bilocation, these duplicate forms of people, have been the object of painstaking observation. Naturally, doubts have been cast upon them, they have been denied on insufficient grounds, through a predetermination to refuse to accept things not understood. We must be more independent, must desire enlightenment, must deny nothing in advance and give ourselves the trouble — or the pleasure — of analyzing in complete freedom of thought.

There are two kinds of duplication, unconscious and conscious. Let us first consider involuntary duplication. We shall then investigate experimental apparitions of the living.

My readers are already familiar with several examples of apparitions of the living given in my preceding books, and it would be superfluous to repeat here these various examples. They have had opportunity to see in “Uranie” Cicero’s story of a young man, in the fullness of life, but menaced with assassination, appearing to his friend and calling on him for help; the story of an Alsatian woman appearing to a compatriot in Rio de Janeiro, while she herself was on a vessel hundreds of kilometers away; that of Robert Bruce seeing before him, on his ship, a stranger writing on a slate and later recognizing this stranger, who had brought about this apparition while he slept; the Baron de Suiza, chamberlain to the King of Sweden, talking to his father, at the entrance to their estate, while the father was in bed in the château. They have also had opportunity to read in “Stella” the story of Bishop Alfonso da Liguori; of the transmission of his thought and his bodily form from his convent in the kingdom of Naples to Rome, to the death bed of Pope Clement XIV, where he was with the pope at his last hour, in 1774, in the midst of a century of incredulity. They may also remember reading in “L’Inconnu” (page 490) of Mrs. Wilmot’s visit to her husband, who was at that time in the cabin of a vessel far away on the ocean,—a visit seen at the same time by another traveler, not without surprise, who bore witness to its reality. And in “Uranie” again (page 196) they may have read of the personal experience told me in 1868 by the cold and exceptionally well-balanced J. Best, the general manager of the *Magasin pittoresque*. He said that when he was a child, lying in his little bed, in Toul, he had seen his mother pass before him, who at that instant was dying in Pau. A hundred, a thousand similar instances could be given. Doubt is no longer possible. The reader has read, too, in the first volume of this work (page 124) of the apparition of Mrs. Russell, wife of the inspector of public instruction in Bombay, who, at that time in Scotland, appeared to her sister in Germany. Then, too, there was the apparition of Mr. Dutton’s friend. Today, all these facts have been proved with absolute certainty.

I shall not return to these experiences, which I may presume known to my readers. We have so many facts to investigate, to compare, that we must consider new ones.

The examples of phantasms, of bilocation, of apparitions, are so numerous that it is impossible to rule them all out of existence and to deny their reality.

To admit a single one is to admit their possibility.

Formerly the saints seemed to have a monopoly of them: Saint Ambrose, for example, seeing from Milan the death of Saint Martin at Tours; Saint Anthony of Padua preaching at Montpellier; Saint Catharine de’ Ricci of Prato speaking with Saint Philip of Neri in Rome; Saint Francis Xavier guiding a bark; Saint Alfonso da Liguori, of whom we have just spoken, etc. In former times people believed in miracles and sought them in the lives of the saints. Today, laymen give rise to the same phenomena.

Let us call to memory the remarkable case of Goethe.

The poet, one rainy summer night, was walking with his friend K—, who was going back with him from the Belvedere to Weimar. Suddenly he halted, as if confronted by an apparition, and stopped speaking. His friend thought nothing of it. Suddenly Goethe cried: “Good heavens! If I weren’t sure my friend Frederick is this minute in Frankfurt, I’d swear it is he!” Then he burst into a great laugh. “But it *is* he, — my friend Frederick! You here, in

Weimar? But, Heavens, my dear fellow, how you've got yourself up! In my dressing-gown, in my night cap, with my slippers on your feet here, on the highway!" His companion, seeing absolutely nothing was terrified, thinking the poet had suddenly gone mad. But Goethe, absorbed by his vision, stretched out his arms and shouted:

"Frederick! Where did you go? Good God! My dear K—, didn't you see where the person we just met went?" K—, astounded, did not answer. Then the poet, turning his head this way and that, exclaimed with a dreamy air: "Yes, I understand. It was a vision. But what can the meaning of all that be? Could my friend have died suddenly? Could that have been his spirit?"

Then Goethe went home, and found Frederick at his house. His hair stood on end. "Away, phantom!" he cried, drawing back, pale as death. "But, my dear fellow," said the visitor, nonplussed, "is that the welcome you give your truest friend?" — "Ah, this time," the poet cried, laughing and weeping at once, "it is not a spirit, it is a being of flesh and blood!" And the two friends embraced with effusion.

Frederick had arrived at Goethe's house, soaked with rain, and had put on the poet's dry clothes; he had then gone to sleep in an arm-chair, and had dreamed that he went to meet Goethe, and that Goethe had questioned him in these words (the same that the poet had uttered): "You here, in Weimar? In my dressing-gown, my night-cap, with my slippers on your feet, here on the highway!"

In these incredible stories of phantasms, that only unfair deniers can reject, I admit at once that what has always seemed most perplexing to me, as in the stories of apparition, are the garments. The astral body was long ago discovered, the Pen, the spiritual body (old as Saint Paul); the discoveries do not explain the clothing. However, neither the living nor the dead show themselves naked. Let us begin our discussion with this adventure of Goethe.

It would seem that we are here concerned with a transmission of images by psychic waves between two brains harmoniously attuned, one serving as a wave-transmitter, the other as a receiver. Modern physics offers us examples that may point the way to the explanation, in telegraphy, photography, and wireless telephony. In this last case it is not words that travel from one point to another. They are broken up into Hertzian waves in order to pass from the starting-point to their destination, where the detector recomposes them so that they may be heard.

His friend's dream could be transmitted to Goethe in the form of waves in the ether, which, by impact on the poet's brain, recomposed the real image. (All images are formed, moreover, in the brain.)

We have no right to deny to that admirable apparatus the brain, endowed with such extraordinary physical and mechanical properties, the properties we make use of in the scientific apparatus we construct ourselves. But the motive power is the *spirit*.

With regard to this story of Goethe, and similar stories, people fifty years ago thought they had rid themselves of all necessity for explanation by one word, one simple word, — *hallucination. Illusion. Nothing.*

They were scarcely hard to please.

We may note several other observations of the psychic in Goethe's life. Those who have read his Memoirs have seen the account of his love affair with the charming daughter of the pastor of Sesenheim, near Strasburg, an impassioned enough idyl, moreover, and one that left an unforgettable memory in his heart. When the hour of fare well had come, Goethe was obliged to go back to Germany, his soul possessed by the little French girl. That was in 1771. They wept inexhaustible tears; but part they must.

Let us now listen to what the future author of "Faust" tells us:

As I was slowly drawing away from the village, I saw, not with the eyes of the body but of the mind, a horseman approaching *Sesenheim* upon the same road on which I was; *this horseman was my self*; I was dressed in a gray coat fringed with gold lace, such as I had never worn; I shook myself, to banish this hallucination, and saw nothing more. It is curious that *eight years afterward I found myself on this same road*, paying a visit to my Friederike, and *wearing the same coat* in which I had appeared to myself; I must add that it was not my will, but — which had made me assume this costume. My readers will think what they like of this bizarre vision; it seems to me prophetic, and, as I found in it the conviction that I should see my sweetheart again, it gave me the courage to rise above the pain of farewell.⁵

These two examples taken from Goethe's life show us at once that the question of phantasms is extremely complex, and lead us still a little farther into the new world which we began to explore in our first volume. In these examples, we are concerned not with a phantasm, but with one of those visions of the future, the reality of which

⁵ Goethe's "Memoirs," translated by Mme. Carlowitz, I, 270. See also "Conversations de Goethe avec Eckermann," p. 405.

has been shown in this book. So we will admit, then, as real, these two cases of the psyche connected with Goethe's life.

Phantasms have been frequently observed in every century.

The philosopher Jerome Cardan of Pavia (1501—76), who from the time he was fifty-five could throw himself, at will, into a trance, describes for us the course of this psychic exteriorization:

When I go into a trance, I have a sensation near my heart as though my soul were parting from my body, and this separation then takes place in the whole of my body, above all in my head and brain. After that I have no sensation, save the feeling of being out of my body.

During the trance he no longer felt the gout, from which he suffered greatly in a normal condition, because his sensibility was completely exteriorized.⁶

Alfred de Musset saw, on occasion, a man sit down beside him "who resembled him like a brother."

George Sand assures us of having had, several times, the visual and audible hallucination of her phantasm.

Guy de Maupassant, at the beginning of the general paralysis that was to bring about his death, saw, with terror, a phantasm of himself seated at his table, and found inspiration in this hallucination in writing "Le Horla."

The manifestations of phantasms often correspond to certain abnormal psychological states.

A great number of cases can be only hallucinations — even dangerous hallucinations — that are within the brain, subjective, in no way objective, external. But these illusions do not do away with realities. Let us proceed in this curious investigation.

In 1845, there was in Livonia, fifty-eight kilometers from Riga and six kilometers from the little town of Volmar, a school for young girls of the nobility, called the Neuwelcke School. The head, at that time, was a certain Monsieur Buch.

The pupils, almost all of noble Livonian families, numbered forty-two; among them was the second daughter of Baron de Güldenstubbé, aged thirteen.

There was, among other instructors, a teacher of French, Mademoiselle Emilie Sagée, born in Dijon. She was of a Northern type, a blonde, with a very beautiful complexion, eyes of a clear blue, slender and a little above middle height; her nature was lovable, sweet, and gay. She was intelligent, and her education was perfect. Her health was good. The superintendents were entirely satisfied with her as a teacher. She was at that time thirty-two years old.

A few weeks after she came into the house, strange rumors about her began to spread among the pupils. When one of them said he had seen her in such and such a part of the building, another declared she had met her somewhere else at the same moment, saying, "Why, no, that can't be true; I just passed her on the stairs," etc. At first, such things were laid to mistakes, but as they did not cease, the young girls began to talk of them. The teachers declared that there was no sense in all this, and that not the least importance was to be attached to it.

But complications were not long in arising.

One day, when Emilie Sagée was giving a lesson to thirteen of these young girls, among them Mademoiselle de Güldenstubbé, and when, in order to make them understand better what she was showing them, she wrote upon the black board the passage to be explained, the pupils saw suddenly, to their great terror, two Dernoiselles Sagée, one beside the other. *They were exactly alike and were going through the same movements.* But the real person had a piece of chalk in her hand and was really writing, while her phantasm had no chalk and was content to imitate the movements she made in writing.

This caused a great sensation in the establishment, all the more because all the young girls, without exception, had seen the second form and agreed perfectly in their description of the phenomenon.

But the most remarkable incident was certainly the following:

One day, all the pupils, forty-two in number, were gathered in the same room, busy embroidering. It was a

⁶ Cardan. "De rerum varietate," XXXIV.

large room on the ground floor, with four large windows; the pupils were all seated before the table, and could see what was going on in the garden; as they were working, they saw Mademoiselle Sagée picking flowers, not far from the house. At the end of the table was another teacher, maintaining discipline, seated a morocco arm-chair. At a given moment this woman went away and the arm-chair was left empty. But this was only for a short time, for the young girls saw in it, suddenly, the form of Mademoiselle Sagée. At once, they looked into the garden, and saw her still busy picking flowers; only, her movements were languid and slower, like those of one *overcome with sleep or exhausted by fatigue*.

Again they looked toward the arm-chair, where the phantasm was seated, silent and motionless. More or less used to these strange manifestations, two of the boldest pupils approached the chair, and, touching the apparition, thought they encountered a *resistance comparable to that which a light tissue of muslin or of crêpe might offer*. One of them even dared to pass in front of the chair and, in fact, to step through part of the form. However, it still lasted a short time, then gradually vanished. They saw, too, that Mademoiselle Sagée had again begun to pick flowers with her usual animation. *The forty-two pupils described the phenomenon in the same way*.

It may be imagined that such a state of things could not exist without consequences to a girls' school. The parents withdrew a large number of pupils, and at the end of eighteen months there remained only twelve out of forty-two. The head was obliged to dismiss Mademoiselle Sagée, in spite of her professional value and her excellent conduct. Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé heard her exclaim, despairingly, "Alas, this is the nineteenth time I have been obliged, since I was sixteen, to give up my position as a teacher!"

This odd example of duplication was published in 1849 by Robert Dale Owen,⁷ who had it at first hand from Baroness Julie de Guldenstubbé; by the review "Light" (1883; page 336), with detailed information; by Aksakof, who vouches for its accuracy⁸ and by most writers on the psychic. I knew, in former days (in 1862), Baron Guldenstubbé and his sister. They were most sincere, perhaps a little mystical, but of unexceptionable integrity.⁹

We saw above that Mademoiselle Sagée was a native of Dijon. Finding myself near Dijon (at the château of Quincey) in August, 1895, I took occasion to find out if a family by the name of Sagée had lived there and were there still. The result of an examination of the civic records of Dijon was not without its curious side.

This teacher was thirty-two years old in 1845. She was, therefore, born in 1813. The civic records of Dijon contain no family named Sagée; but they record the birth, on January 3, 1813, of a child named Octavie Saget — as a "natural daughter." This name is so like that of the teacher that it is difficult to doubt the identity. Would not her wandering life in Germany and in Russia be partially explained by her irregular birth? Could Mademoiselle de Guldenstubbé's memory have confused the given name, — a mistake slight enough, moreover, — as well as the spelling of the name? That is possible, in view of the fact that all these statements were made in foreign languages. Could the teacher, alarmed by her eighteen changes of position, have herself made a slight change in her name?

Charles du Prel has spoken of this story of duplication in his work "*La Mort et l'Au-delà*" (1905) and spelled the name Emilie *Saget*. "Her astral body," he writes, "was seen by an entire girls' school during the whole course of her stay in that institution."

I have known persons, sure of their learning, who fancy that they can solve the problem by these two words: *collective hallucination*. That is being content with little. We may repeat with Professor Morselli, head of the Clinical Department of Mental Diseases of the University of Genoa, what lie said as to Eusapias's séances:

This explanation is no explanation, since the visions obey the normal laws of optics (perspective, front views, side views, etc.), and were, moreover, spoken of by all those who took part. An alienist used for so many years, as I am, to detecting and diagnosing illusory conditions and hallucinations, would find it strange for a group of six, eight, or twelve persons, to fall into the grip of a causeless hallucination, — persons sound in mind and in full possession of their senses. It is inadmissible that they should all of them, suddenly, in the absence of any pathological condition or in an in comprehensible morbid condition, lasting only a few instants, fall into this grip and return at once, as though nothing had happened, to their full functional health of nerves and brain.

And then we have, really, under our eyes, too many concordant facts of the same sort.

No, it was not a collective hallucination. The teacher lost her position nineteen times on account of this

⁷ In *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another Life*.

⁸ *Animisme et Spiritisme*. pp. 498—504.

⁹ Baron de Guldenstubbé is the author of that curious book *La réalité des esprits et le phénomène merveilleux de leur écriture directe*, with facsimiles (Paris, 1857).

peculiarity. The double was real, objective. Probably it might have been photographed. (For thirty years, from my Juvisy observatory, I have been taking photographs of the rainbow, which does not exist, which is not real, under which no one can pass, which is not the same for two observers near together, and which is only a visual phenomenon.)

The double of which I am about to speak could not have been photographed, though two persons saw it. It was brought to my knowledge by General Berthaut, former chief of the Army Geographical Service, a former member of the board of the Paris Observatory, who told me of it recently (April 2, 1920), and made the following remarks: "I can vouch absolutely for the perfect sincerity of the observations which I am about to submit to you, and will confide to you the names of the observers as well as the circumstances; but if you give the facts in one of your works, I shall ask you to suppress the names; the friends of whom I speak or their relatives might not like the publicity which would be given them."

Here are these extremely valuable observations:

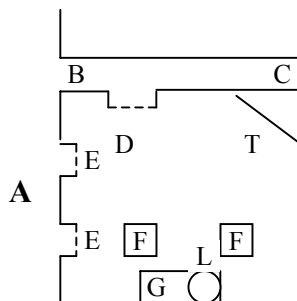
In 1870, as a prisoner in Mersebourg (Prussia), I had got to know an officer of another regiment, a lieutenant named —, because we both painted. He was older than I, had resigned his commission, had reentered the service with his old regiment for the duration of the war, and had, like me, been taken prisoner at Sedan. He was interested in occultism, and it is due to that circumstance that I, too, took it up.

After the war my friend returned to civilian life. He went back home to his parents at —. He came to see me in Paris, and I went several times to spend some days with him.

My friend's father was a retired cavalry captain; his mother was a most worthy and devout woman; both were benevolent, very serious-minded, and the soul of honor. They would never have thought of lying, or even of making a jest in bad taste. Their circumstances were modest and their house extremely simple. They spent much of their time in a large room on the ground floor, which served as my friend's parlor and workroom. There he kept his books, his canvases, and his easels, and in a corner of the room, to the left as one entered, a blackboard. I am making a sketch of this room for you.

The evening of September 1, 1870, the day of the Battle of Sedan, about nine o'clock, my comrade's mother and father were seated facing one another, in the arm-chairs F, on each side of the mantelpiece, on which was the lamp.

Suddenly *both* saw the door (D) open, and their son, in uniform, come into the parlor, and then close the door. Next, he went toward the blackboard (T), took up a piece of chalk, drew a circle on the blackboard, and put a dot in the center of this circle. After that, without looking or speaking to his father and mother, my friend opened the door again, and went away.



A. Square before the church. B. Entrance to the house. B, C. Corridor. D. Door to the parlor. E. Windows. F. Arm-chairs. G. Mantel piece. T. Blackboard. L. Lamp.

Dumfounded for an instant, the father and mother ended by rising; taking up the lamp, they ascertained that there remained upon the blackboard no trace of the circle drawn by the phantom of their son.

These are the facts. Both saw in the same way what happened. No detail differed, either as to the costume or the attitude of the son. What one saw *by looking to the right, the other saw by looking to the left*.

My comrade and I discussed this story before his parents.

What was he doing at nine o'clock in the evening, after the battle? He did not know.

Probably he was asleep. We were all of us extremely tired. For my part, I had spent twelve hours on horseback, almost without touching my feet to the ground. At nine o'clock I must have been asleep, and he too. But what is certain is that he was never aware of having gone, in spirit, to his village, of having gone into his home, and of having made a circle, in chalk, on his

blackboard.

As to the circle, he found this explanation: it meant that he was a prisoner, — a circle and a dot inside it. But he had not remembered it.

I lost touch with him when I left for Japan, as head of the military mission of 1884, from which I did not return until 1889. The father and mother are certainly dead, and it is probable that the son is, too.

(Letter 4125)

We cannot doubt in any way the authenticity of the apparition here told of by General Berthaut. The father and the mother of the lieutenant really saw him, — “saw,” in the generally accepted sense, not in a dream, but wide awake. However, the circle drawn by their son did not exist. What conclusion shall we draw? The officer sleeping far away, in captivity, thought of his parents, and was borne in spirit into their room; he opened and closed the door in spirit, took the chalk and traced the circle, still in spirit, and those things acted upon the minds of his parents, without there being anything objective, material, ponderable, and tangible, in all this. If we refused to admit this authenticity, we should have to suppose that both had been the dupes, at the same moment, of the same causeless hallucination, one that corresponded, moreover, to the captivity of their son, which they could not have surmised. This hypothesis seemed the most probable fifty years ago, before our present knowledge; it is no longer acceptable today. This phantasm of the lieutenant of 1870 was a *thought-form*.

What variety in these apparitions of the living!

A well-defined phantasm of a living person was described in 1905, in the English newspapers, — “The Empire” of May 14th, “The Daily News” of May 17th, etc., — and their accounts were reproduced in the “Annales des Sciences psychiques” of June, 1905, under the heading “An Apparition in the House of Commons.” Here is the published account:

Some time before the Easter Vacation of Parliament Major Sir Came Raschse had an attack of influenza, complicated by neurosis. His condition became serious enough to keep him from going to the House, in spite of his wish to support the Government at the evening session preceding the vacation, a session which might have serious results. It was then that his friend Sir Gilbert Parker was astonished and saddened to see him near his usual seat. Here is Sir Gilbert’s own account:

“I wished to take part in the debate. My gaze fell upon Sir Came Raschse, seated near his usual place. As I knew that he had been ill, I waved to him in a friendly way, and said: ‘I hope you are better.’ But he gave me no sign of recognition, which greatly astonished me. His face was very pale. He was seated, his head resting, motionless, on one hand; the expression of his face was impassive and hard. For a moment I wondered what I had better do; when I again turned toward him, he had disappeared. I regretted this, and at once went to seek him, hoping to find him in the vestibule. But Raschse was not there, and no one had seen him.

In the “Daily News” of May 17th, Sir Arthur Hayter added his testimony to that of Sir Gilbert Parker. He declared that he, too, had seen Sir Came Raschse, and that, moreover, he had drawn the attention of Sir Henry Banner- man to his presence.

This Member of Parliament was not a little surprised to receive, soon afterward, his two friends’ felicitations, congratulating him on not being dead; he frightened his whole family with the story of his apparition. As for him, he did not doubt that he had really gone in spirit to the House, for he had been extremely preoccupied with the thought of attending the session for a debate which interested him particularly. This phantasm was, in truth, real; two, three witnesses saw it. Here is another which resembles it oddly:

The newspaper “Le Temps” of July 3, 1899, related the following facts:

From our English correspondent — For some days a report has spread that a suite of the House of Commons, giving upon the speaker’s courtyard, was haunted. Nothing was said as to whether the specter had ever ventured into the lobbies of the House.

Several members of Parliament grew uneasy. The truth was at last discovered. The phantom is not a ghost, but the *double* of a person still living. And this person is none other than the wife of one of the principal office-holders of Westminster Palace, Mr. Archibald Milman, secretary of the House of Commons (at a salary of 38,000 francs).

Mrs. Milman tells in these words the story of her specter:

“The strangest thing about it is that it is true. It has lasted for years. I am afflicted with another self that people meet in places where I am not. The other day a friend took leave of me in the work-room in which I give myself up to a passion for binding books. Scarcely had he stepped out at the door, when he found me again on the landing of the stairway. Dumfounded, he shrank aside to let me pass. I had not stirred.

Every moment there are adventures of this kind. One of my governesses has just left me because she is very nervous and the frequency of these apparitions made her positively ill. This very day a young woman living with us saw me in the courtyard, without my having left the house.

I have never seen my *double*. But I have heard it, one evening, just as I had come into my room, I heard a cracking sound and went out upon the landing. All the doors that I had just closed were open. I went back precipitately, and rang both for the nurse and the house-steward. There is only one stairway; the nurse sleeps in the attic and the house in the basement. They were forced to meet the intruder. And, as a matter of fact, the nurse had seen nothing, but the house-steward was most surprised to find me in my room, Since he had just seen me, he said, opening the door of a hall on the ground floor.

Here, as in the preceding case, we are concerned with a real, an objective phantasm.

Let us compare, examine closely.

A phantasm which recalls that of Mademoiselle Sagée was observed by Dr. George Wyld, the most conscientious of investigators; the account of it was published in "Light," in 1882 (page 26), and reproduced by Aksakof.¹⁰ He writes:

I was on the friendliest terms with Miss Jackson and her mother. The statements they made to me were confirmed by one of the two maids who were witnesses. As to the other, I was not able to find her.

This young woman had been very assiduous in her visits to the poor. One day, when she was going back home after a day spent in works of charity, she felt tired and restless from the cold, and experienced a desire to go and warm herself at the kitchen stove, on her return. At a moment corresponding exactly to that at which this idea passed through her mind, two maid-servants, who were in the kitchen, saw the door-knob turn and the door open to admit Miss Jackson, who went up to the fire and warmed her hands. The attention of the servants was caught by the glazed kid gloves, green in color, which she had on her hands. Suddenly, before their very eyes, she disappeared. Dumfounded, they went up to her mother, and told her of the adventure, without forgetting the detail of the gloves.

This lady felt some apprehension, but she tried to calm the servants, telling them that her daughter had never had any green gloves, and that, in consequence, their vision could only have been an illusion.

Half an hour afterward, Miss Jackson, in person, came in; she went straight to the kitchen and warmed herself before the fire: she had green gloves on her hands, not having been able to find black ones.

An extremely rigorous investigation, made by Dr. Wyld, established the exactitude of these facts.

A phantasm dressed, as it was, at the moment of its apparition — with green gloves! The clothes constituting part of the duplication!

To call to mind the fluid body, the astral body, the spiritual body, all the ethereal bodies one will acknowledge, does not seem to me to solve the problem at all.

It is impossible to deny the reality of these apparitions. There are too many of them.

Certain spiritualists believe they can explain apparitions of the dead, with their clothing, by the supposition that the spirit that manifests itself can make garments for itself quite as well as a body indubitably material, if it so wishes, the better to establish its identity. That is a hypothesis to be discussed with extreme care. But it does not apply in this case. This young woman, who was cold, simply thought of going to warm herself at the kitchen stove, as, without doubt, she sometimes did in like circumstances, and she was mentally disposed to go there; she was already there in spirit. But how could this thought have affected the eyesight of the two servants to the point of showing them the gloves she wore at that moment? It was not only the thought that was transmitted, it was an image, a kind of photograph, an aspect, a form, a simulacrum, as Lucretius affirmed (Book IV), and this without any will to show her self to the servants. We are familiar with experimental apparitions, produced by will power: this is another kind of phenomenon. Here, we are concerned with an image in color and in relief, transmitted by telepathy, like the officer of Sedan in his uniform.

We cannot find an explanation. Could one have explained X-rays, the seeing of your skeleton through your clothes, before their invention? And all the scientific discoveries? Science will one day explain all this.

In a great number of cases the phantasm seems to be simply a projection of a person at the moment of being observed, and, in all details, just as that person is at that moment.

An optical projection.

¹⁰ *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 514.

We will give a special chapter to *thought as a generator of images projected to a distance*.

The variety of these observations is very great. By comparing them, we shall, perhaps, be able to learn something.

It would seem to me difficult not to include the following story in this chapter concerning phantasms of the living. The letter I give here was literally transcribed from a communication that I received from Prague in 1902:

My Dear Astronomer:

In accordance with the wish of Professor Hess, I am taking the liberty of telling you of an occurrence worthy of your investigations, the absolute truth of which I guarantee on my word of honor, and on that of my friend who had the vision.

This friend's name is Flora Kruby. We have no secrets from each other. The lady is married, and is my truest friend. We see something of a gentleman whom we know, who is a physician. For a certain period Madame Kruby was prevented from taking part in our reunions, and I had not seen her for several weeks, during which time she had no news of me or of the doctor. One day, when I found myself, without Madame Kruby, with this doctor and several other people in society, I had a discussion with the physician; he is very good-hearted, but easily flies into a violent temper. I was so angry that I made a resolution to break with him and never again to speak to him.

That same day he was to undertake a long trip, to fill the place of a professor for several weeks.

The other day, Madame Kruby (who knew nothing of his departure) arrived at my home breathless, and told me, trembling all over, her face agitated, and with an air of consternation, what had happened to her during the night. She has, in consequence, written the following account for me and for you:

"Mademoiselle, I had a vision last night! I had never believed in such things. On the contrary, when people came to tell me this sort of stories, I would burst out laughing. Hear me, then; listen. I had not yet gone to sleep; all the doors were locked. Suddenly the door of my bedroom opened softly and some one came in! I thought, of course, that it was my husband. For several days he had had a toothache, and I supposed he had come to look for a remedy. I asked: 'Is that you? Are you suffering?' No reply. But a shade approached my bed swiftly, leaned toward me, and said: 'It is I, Dr. B—. I have come to ask you something!' — 'Good heavens!' I cried, 'Are you dead?' — 'No, I am alive; I am leaving on a trip of several weeks, and as we are all mortal, one can't know. I can find no rest without addressing a prayer to you: I know you are a good friend of Mademoiselle Lux, and that you have a great influence over her; beg her to pardon me; I did not wish to offend her, for I love her without her suspecting it; but be discreet. I am saying this only to you; I have confidence in you; you are loyal; the others are not. So forgive my prayer.'

"After these words he disappeared, and went away, but my husband, who had heard the noise of the door, woke up and asked me for an explanation. I did not have the courage to speak; I was trembling and deeply agitated, and even yet, when I think of this vision, I begin to tremble anew.

"I saw the doctor distinctly, he spoke to me with animation, as usual; I felt his breath, for he spoke in a low voice, very near and bending over my bed."

Several weeks passed after this vision. Madame Kruby and I kept it secret and, as for me, I could not help remaining skeptical as to its reality. After the doctor's return I asked him, one day, how he had spent the night after our dispute, and he answered: "In spite of my great irritation, I fell into a deep sleep in the train, thinking of you; I dreamed of you, the thought of you followed me, and did not leave me until the moment I lost all consciousness in sleep."

Dear Master, in telling you of this occurrence, I am asking my friend to add her signature to mine, as a more complete guarantee for you.

Anne Lux

Flora Kruby

Having come to the end of my letter, I take the liberty of saying that I have such esteem, such respect for you personally, and for your work, that it would be impossible for me to deceive you.

(Letter 1039)

Professor Hess added his signature to the letter; this guarantees the authenticity of the account.

Our first thought is to see in this only a dream. The simplest explanations are the first to thrust them upon our attention.

What in this story is subjective, and what is objective? How make allowance for that which belongs to the narrator's brain, to the vision she had personally, and that which he longs to the doctor's telepathic transmission?

Her impressions were complex. We cannot see why the spirit of the doctor, sent, during a dream, to the

lady in question, should have needed to open a door. Psychic radiations pass through walls, like electric, magnetic, and other currents. In this case there was, without doubt, an association of ideas. But then, why did Madame Kruby see the door open, and how did her husband hear the noise?

We may answer that lightning, which goes through walls, also opens doors. We may note the cases of the officer of Sedan and of Miss Jackson.

A further objection: this door was locked!

Again the answer: in spiritualistic séances locked doors have been seen to open.

Let us acknowledge that we are explaining nothing. But let us not reject observations which seem real and exact, because we cannot explain them.

What we must note is that by some means — unknown to him, moreover, and unconscious, — the doctor made himself visible to this lady, made himself heard, and charged her with a commission which she carried out. Analyze the account in all its details, and you will see how difficult it is to attribute to a hallucination, to an error: (1) the seeing and hearing of the doctor by the seer; (2) the noise of the door, heard by her husband; (3) the synchronism with the doctor's obsession.

A case of the transmission of force to a distance.

It is the comparative study of similar facts which can enlighten us. Let us continue.

Here is another account, not less curious, received in April, 1889:

We have a friend whose mother is deaf and dumb. As the mother lives very far from us, not even being French, we had never seen her; we corresponded with her, and it was understood that I should go to see her in the course of the summer of 1897.

But before I made the trip I knew her, and this is how. I had just gone to bed; I had hardly laid my head upon my pillow when, at the foot of my bed, but higher up, almost at the ceiling, I saw the pretty face of an old lady, smiling at me. I was frightened and hid my head under the covers; then, ashamed of myself, I put the covers aside, determined to be brave, if, indeed, I had not been dreaming. The smiling face was still there, but this time it was coming toward me. All my fine courage fled; once more I hid my head in the blankets, and, to make completely sure that I was dreaming, I pinched myself hard. When I decided to look again, there was no longer anything there. The next day I told this to my mother, whom I had not called, though she was not asleep. She told me that it was, perhaps, Grandmother, who had had, in fact, a fine and delicate face. This grandmother had died long since, without me ever having known her, and I was not very ready to admit this hypothesis. After some time the incident was forgotten.

In the month of August I made the projected trip. Imagine my surprise when in the mother of our friend I recognized the nice little old lady who had frightened me so. The only difference was that my apparition wore a white cap, which framed her face, and that this lady did not wear one. But, after all, since it was night when she came to pay me a visit, it was, perhaps, a night-cap.

This occurrence took place in a little region of the Department of Saône-et-Loire. What may give it some value is the fact that I am a skeptic, and wish to admit only facts which can be proved by A + B; every thing in me balks at the supernatural. It is unnecessary after saying that, to tell you with what trembling interest I am following your investigations.

I should be very happy if I can have brought to your notice the slightest bit of evidence.

L. Bugaut

Charleston, Ballinacurra, Cork.

(Letter 622)

If space were not limited, if I did not have to condense a great number of documents into a small number of separate chapters, I might publish numerous letters received, and might here reveal various examples of all kinds, proving the indisputable reality of phantasms of the living. In themselves alone they would make a volume like this one. (It is in existence, moreover, is already written, but for the moment I must leave it unpublished). But I should be sorry not to mention one of the most curious and striking that of Miss Rhoda Clary, seen by her whole family (twelve persons) seated in a rocking-chair in a garden holding her little sister in her arms, though she had not left her room. Bozzano has discussed this bilocation in the best critical spirit.¹¹ Its authenticity has been particularly well established.

¹¹ It can be read in the *Annales des Sciences psychiques* of March, 1911.

Observations as to phantasms of the living are much more numerous than one imagines. One finds them everywhere. In “Les Hallucinations télépathiques” for example, we may read on page 357 the story of a friend, seen by two Young girls, who was passing before the window behind which they were talking, and was recognized by them, with no grounds for doubt, though he had stayed at home despite his intention to go out; and, on the following page, the presence in a business office of a friend of the narrator. The writer spoke to him without receiving any reply; he was seen for rather a long time by two other persons as well. People say “collective hallucinations,” which explains nothing at all.

These are real, objective, external apparitions. If they were but subjective, if they came only from the brain, they should be visible with the eyes closed as well as with the eyes open.

Now, nothing of the sort happens: one sees an apparition in a half-wakeful dream, is afraid of it, hides beneath the covers, sees nothing more. One looks again: there the apparition is. It fills a definite space.

The phantasms just brought to our notice are manifestations of the living, unrelated to death, and simply prove to us the reality of these phenomena, as yet unexplained. They show that one would be wrong to be alarmed when they occur. The following experience, on the contrary, preceded a death in most singular fashion.

One of my readers wrote me on February 26, 1899:

In the month of November, 1850, having been invited to the marriage of one of my cousins, at Lapalisse (Allier), I had gone there in company with an uncle, Monsieur Meulien, of Chalon We were both sleeping in the same room. The morning of our departure for Lapalisse, when we had to take a carriage early, I woke up about seven o'clock, and saw my relative standing at the foot of my bed, his arms crossed over his burnoose, a cloak in the fashion of that time; he was gazing at me very sadly. I sat up and said to him, aloud: “What? Already up! But we've lots of time!”

The apparition vanished. I looked behind me. My uncle was sleeping peacefully in his bed.

Two hours later, as our carriage was bowling along the road to Donjon, my fellow-traveler and an aged woman-servant within the vehicle, I upon the seat, I felt a tug at my sleeve and heard the changed voice of the old woman: “Monsieur Jules, your uncle is ill !”

I turned. The unfortunate man had his head thrown back; his eyes were white; a little foam was on his lips; he was dying in his burnoose.

That morning he was just as he had been the day before. Nothing in his demeanor gave rise to any suspicion that he had afforded me the strange spectacle of his duplication, by showing himself in two forms at once; here in his traveling costume, there in bed, un dressed and asleep, living and a phantom at the same time.

I was then twenty-one; my mind was perfectly sound and well balanced.

As a witness I can give Madame Alix Burelle, living at Saint Géraud-le-Puy (Allier), my cousin, on the occasion of whose marriage the occurrence took place, and who remembers my account.

Jules Garnier,
of Aiguebelle, Drôme.

The coincidence that death followed the apparition of the phantasm does not absolutely prove an interrelation between the two facts, since there are cases of bilocation with out consequent deaths. It brings us, however, to the study of apparitions of the dying before death, a subject we shall soon investigate.

The manifestation just related is one of the most curious in my collection. It would seem that the traveler, the uncle, still asleep, dreamed that he was making ready to get into the carriage, and exteriorized his own image. Still more remarkable is the fact that he was on the point of dying, and of departing for the Beyond!

Farther on, we shall devote a special investigation to phantasms associated with death. What we had to establish was the reality of phantasms of the living. We are thus prepared for that which is to follow.

I shall now cease giving these examples, although, as I said above, I have a great number of others on my writing-table at this moment, — others verified no less exactly. The reader may well admit that *my certainty is well grounded*.

Like all the phenomena revealed in this work, phantasms have been observed for hundreds and hundreds of years. To recall only one example, we may read in Tacitus's Roman History (Book IV, Section 82) what happened to Vespasian with regard to the Egyptian, Basilides. Space is lacking for its citation.

Our personalities are more complex than is generally believed. Every one has been able to note that those of normal life differ considerably from those of nocturnal dreams. As yet we know almost nothing of our true natures. Can this complexity teach us anything in explanation of phantasms?

For thousands of years, let us repeat, the phenomena here examined have been known to a certain number of the initiated. Phantasms were an integral part of the Egyptian religion, and it was the same with the Greeks. Plutarch and Tertullian constantly remind us of this, in the ease of the Latin classics. But there has been so much exaggeration, so much credulity, so much superstition, that people ended by wiping the slate clean as to all stories of phantasms and of ghosts.

Charles du Prel adopts the theory of the *od* and of the astral body. He writes:

The certainty that the exteriorized astral body is capable of an independent life, allows us to appreciate the fine speech of Abbot Steinmetz, who, seeing his double seated in his garden, in his favorite place, while he himself was in his room, in company with several friends, said to them, pointing first to himself, then showing his phantasm seated in the garden: "Here in the mortal Steinmetz, and there the immortal Steinmetz."

One will agree that these observations of phantasms of the living are well calculated to convince us of the reality of the phenomena. A man, a woman in good health, may in the form of a phantom be in a spot other than that in which the normal body is. This is a bold affirmation. But let us not have the cowardice of those who dare not avow what is contrary to the general belief of the mob.

Paris, France, Europe, Asia, America, the ocean, are at this moment flying through space at a speed of 107,000 kilometers an hour, in their revolution round the sun. An affirmation equally audacious!

Every dispassionate reader desirous of being enlightened as to the reality of these enigmatical, hardly credible facts — unbelievable, even, to those who have not investigated them sufficiently — knows his ground when he accepts as true these psychic manifestations. To explain them is another matter. But let us seek further instruction. The number of observed facts is not a negligible quantity.

The duplications we have just passed in review were formed, for the most part, unconsciously. Alfonso da Liguori had left his body in a state of catalepsy in his convent, while he appeared to the pope; Goethe's friend did not know that he had shown himself to Goethe on the road to Weimar, etc. But will power can produce experimental phantasms. That is what we shall prove.

There are not only phantasms formed unconsciously; there are also phantasms produced by the will. We shall here consider several experiments carried out with great exactitude, and compare them. People have tried, with success, to bring about experimental apparitions between the living. On page 124 of the first volume of this work we are told of a most remarkable one, — of Mrs. Russell, wife of the Inspector of Public Instruction in Bombay, who wished to appear to one of her sisters, in Germany (she herself was then living in Scotland), and who, in fact, appeared to the sister, to her stupefaction. We told of this apparition before, as well as that of Mrs. Wilmot. The readers of "Uranie" have already been able to note, too (page 219), the experimental apparition produced by the will of the pastor Godfrey, which appeared to a friend of his, a woman. We shall have here, before our eyes, other examples not less precisely verified than those we already know.

The classic schools of learning have been, up to the present, on a wrong tack. In the human organism nothing is seen, touched, analyzed, dissected, but what is coarsest, most evident, and most superficial. People are still ignorant concerning the inherent subtleties of that organism; nevertheless, it is most essential that we understand these.

Among other uncomprehended things it is not to be doubted that the proximity of a person influences us, at times very strongly, and almost instantaneously. There is about our bodies an invisible, active aura. My late lamented friend Colonel de Rochas, who, from 1892 to 1895, made a great number of experiments as to this point (I was present at these, in his rooms of the Polytechnic School, of which he was the head), ascertained the nature of this phenomenon of the exteriorization of sensibility. Reichenbach had given the name of *od* to this fluid body, a substance not electricity, but polarized, and his partisans invented the term *odic phantasm*. Perhaps there is in this only the electricity of the human body setting the ether in vibration. But, whatever its nature, there can be no doubt as to an enveloping sphere of influence. Human beings are bound together by invisible emanations.

This fluid body, this astral body, may detach itself from our material bodies in certain circumstances and

certain conditions.

One day a Canadian came to me, in Paris, to tell me he wished absolutely to banish all doubts as to the reality of the phenomena attributed to the fakirs of India, and that he had left his wife and his children, to go personally, that he might gain an understanding of this question, with the firm intention of verifying all by his own experience. Three years afterward he came back to me. "I acceded," he said, "to all demands. I had been assured that in one or two years I might acquire the same faculties, upon condition (1) that I no longer eat either meat or fish; (2) that I myself cultivate, gather, clean, and cook the vegetables for my nourishment; (3) that I drink only water; (4) that I preserve an absolute chastity; (5) that I plan my days according to such and such rules. By force of will I succeeded. It was not long before my double projected itself from me. I grew accustomed to it. But I have had enough, for I feel myself going mad, and I am returning home. Why, this morning, at the Grand Hotel, where I am stopping, I was still in bed, when I saw myself stretched out on the sofa opposite, and it was not long before I had the impression that I was really on this sofa. Then I saw myself rise, hover in the air, go toward the window, and make ready to jump from the fourth floor to the boulevard. Instantly, I sprang from my bed: terrified, I preferred to see my astral body and my soul again enter my physical body. And I came to pay you the visit that I had promised you I would make upon my return."

How distinguish illusions from realities? It is not always easy, and it took the narrator, with all his methodical spirit, more than a year to assure himself of the real existence of his phantasm.

I admit that I do not see how clothing can be explained. The astral body is not merely of the imagination. It is founded upon various kinds of observations.

This impalpable, invisible body, which exists during life and subsists after death, was known to ancient religions, notably that of the Egyptians. It is the *ka* represented in the subterranean chambers of Egypt, the "spiritual body" of Saint Paul, the "astral body" of the theosophists the "Peri" of the spiritualists. This imponderable body possesses forces all its own, we might call it the garment of the soul, despite the crudeness of this designation.

I am the possessor of a certain number of painstaking observations concerning this envelop of the soul. Here is one among others. One of my readers wrote me from Geneva, on November 1, 1920:

It is not a scientist who writes you, but a financier, so, like you, a man of figures, but in another realm of ideas.

I had a disease of the heart, which is now cured, but which played me some nasty tricks. On one occasion, among others, I remained for a certain time Plunged in a lethargy, I heard all my family talking around me, but I was not I: my *self* was beside me, standing, a white and fluid body; I saw the grief of those who were striving to revive me and I had this thought: "Of what use is this miserable cast-off skin that they seek to bring to life again?" Nevertheless, perceiving their sadness, a great longing came over me to return to them, — a thing which happened. However, it seems to me that I had wished it I could have remained in the Beyond; I saw the door to it half open, but cannot say what was behind.

J. Ramel

(Letter 4295)

In my search for a solution of the problem I asked the author if his double were naked. His reply was that he had not noticed, that he remembered only that it was larger than he, of vague contours and a clear gray color.

Let us continue our researches.

Among the experiences of duplication of which I personally have had knowledge I shall here note those of Mademoiselle Alma Hømmerlé daughter of my friend Madame Agatha Hømmenjé the translator of the works of Charles du Prel, whose acquaintance we made in the first volume (page 207).

Here are two of these experiments, which my friend Colonel de Rochas has already published in the "Annales des Sciences psychiques" of September, 1906. The experimenter was then about eighteen years old. She herself wrote the following account:

(1) My first experiment took place at Kherson (southern Russia), where my brother was concluding his studies at the college. His classmates often came to our house, and, as my mother concerned herself with psychic questions which interested us all, we resolved one evening to make an experiment.

Consequently, we set a time at which two of these young men, Messieurs Stankewitch and Serboff, would try, on the

following day, to send their doubles toward us, one at eleven o'clock at night, the other at half-past eleven. We set our watches together, and it was arranged that Monsieur Stankewitch should go and find my brother in his bedroom, while Monsieur Serboff would show himself in the drawing-room.

The evening of the following day my sister Irma sat down in the dining-room, whence she could see the open door giving on the drawing-room. My brother, as had been arranged, remained in his bed-chamber.

After I had stayed with my sister a moment, I entered my brother's room. The lamp in the dining-room gave enough light in the bed-chamber to enable objects to be discerned. At the same moment I felt something push against my shoulder, and I saw beside me the very distinct form of Monsieur Stankewitch; I could distinguish his dark uniform with its buttons of white metal. At the same instant my brother said to me: "There he is, beside you.— Did you see him?" he added almost immediately, for, after his exclamation, the apparition had vanished.

My sister, hearing us speak, came up to us, saying that she had just seen Monsieur Stankewitch enter by the door of the drawing room, pass near the table in the dining-room, and then disappear from her sight. She, too, had seen him in uniform and had been able to distinguish the buttons of white metal.

Immediately afterward all three of us went into the drawing-room, which was lighted by the dining-room lamp, to wait for the apparition of Monsieur Serboff. It did not come until about midnight. This apparition seemed to us more pallid than the preceding one, and less distinct. It went into the drawing-room by way of an outer chamber; there it halted for a moment near the door, and went to the right, toward one of the bookcases, then to the left, toward the other; then it disappeared suddenly.

My brother then wrote upon two sheets of paper the results of the experiment, put these in an envelop, and sealed them. The next day, at the college, he asked his two friends if they had not forgotten their promise. They began at once, before their comrades, to relate all the details, which corresponded exactly with all my brother had written. Then he gave them the sealed envelops, which were opened, and the contents read aloud. After having read the statement concerning him, Monsieur Serboff said that at the moment of entering the drawing-room he was undecided as to which book case he wished to approach, for he had had the intention of opening one and taking a book out; but he lost the power of concentration and returned to himself. Feeling too tired, he could not begin the experiment again.

This experiment is most interesting, and would have been still more so if the observers had not been warned of the trial which was to be made, as in the following case:

(2) My sister Irma went to spend several days in the country, with one of our friends, while I remained with my parents. It was the first time I had been separated from my twin sister; and, as her absence was very painful to me, I decided to go and see what she was doing.

It was eleven o'clock at night, and I was in bed. Soon I saw myself in the room that she was sharing with our friend, and I perceived my sister, lying in her bed, a book in her hand, reading by the rays of a lamp with a green shade. She felt my presence, lifted her eyes, and saw me standing near the stove. When I saw that she was looking at me, I tried to hide behind the stove, for fear she might be frightened by the apparition, not being sure that she would recognize me.

The following day, I wrote her the details I have just given, and received a letter telling me that she had seen me the day before, at eleven o'clock at night, near the stove.

My sister and I have repeated this experiment several times, but it does not always succeed.

Alma Hæmmerle

My friend Colonel de Rochas, having hypnotized Mademoiselle Hæmmerlé on the occasion of a trip to Paris, thought that the experiment might perhaps succeed with him, between Sweden and France; but he saw nothing on the day and at the time agreed upon.

Hypnotists, Baron Dupotet among others, relate, however, a great number of experiments of this sort which have succeeded. Dr. Charpignon cites the following facts in his work "Physiologic, Médecine et Métaphysique du magnétisme":

On one occasion one of our somnambulists (from Orléans) wished in one of her trances to go to see her sister, who was in Blois. She knew the road, and followed it mentally.

"Why!" she cried, "where is Monsieur Jouanneau going, anyway?"

"Where are you?"

"I am at Meung, near les Mauves, and I came upon Monsieur Jouanneau, all dressed up; doubtless he 's going to dine at some château."

Then she continued her trip.

Now, the person who had shown himself spontaneously to the somnambulist was a native of Meung, known by several

persons present, and letters were immediately written in order to learn from him if he was really taking a walk at the time given and the place designated.

His reply confirmed minutely what had been said.

What food for thought! What psychological research lies in phenomena of such chance occurrence! This somnambulist's sight had not *leaped*, as is so often the case, to the desired spot; it had *passed over the whole distance* from Orléans to Blois and she had seen in this rapid journey things which might attract her attention.

To return to the experiments of Mesdemoiselles Hœmmerlé, I must add that I knew them personally, as well as their mother, and that their sincerity cannot be doubted.

We spoke, not long ago, of Colonel de Rochas's experiments. Space is lacking here to reveal even a part of these, and I can only send the reader who is curious to know them to the special works of this ingenious experimenter, and of his emulators.¹² It can no longer be doubted that human beings possess fluid phantasms which may, under certain conditions, become visible and tangible. The phantasm possesses powers of its own, which it may augment by taking over various elements. Is it this phantasm which, in Crookes's experiments, produced the phantom Katie King, which differed greatly from the medium Florence Cook in her height, her hair, and her heart-beats?¹³ Is it of such elements that the medium Eusapia Paladino formed the so-called John King, whose silhouette I discerned one day?¹⁴ Then, too, an "ethereal body" is spoken of, — different from the "astral body," — a "mental body," a "causal body," etc.; but let us not leave the domain of the positive method. Let us admit only what has been proved. *Quod gratis affirmatur gratis negatur*. All this must be investigated, discussed, and analyzed by observation and by experience.

The facts are numerous and varied. We shall investigate a few of those that are better established.

An experimental apparition was told of by the eminent professor William James, as having been produced by one of his colleagues of the celebrated Harvard University. It was published in the "Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research" of April, 1909, and in the "Annales des Sciences psychiques" of the following August. Professor Blank, then studying Buddhism, conceived the idea "of projecting his astral body" into the room of one of his friends, eight hundred meters away, and hidden by a hill; and the latter, without having been told of this in any way, saw him, looking through the half-open door. He got up and went to meet him, but found no one there.

The following experiment is, perhaps, still more particularly worthy of attention, for it was verified by several witnesses.¹⁵ The narrator writes:

One Sunday evening in November, 1881, I had just read a book in which there was given evidence of the power of will. Suddenly I made a firm resolve to make every effort to appear, in person, on the second story of a house situated at 22 Hogarth Road, Kensington, in a room in which slept two persons of my acquaintance, the Misses Verity, aged twenty-five and eleven. I lived fifty kilometers away, and I had spoken of the experiment to no one, for the simple reason that the thought of it had not come to me until that Sunday night, when I was going to bed. I projected my will at one o'clock in the morning, firmly resolved to manifest my presence.

The following Thursday I went to see these ladies, and in the course of our conversation (without my having made any allusion to what I had attempted) the elder told me that on the preceding Sunday she had seen me standing near her bed, and had been greatly frightened; that the apparition advanced toward her, that she had screamed and awakened her little sister who also had seen me.

I asked her if she had been really awake at this moment, and she affirmed that she was. "At what time?" I asked. "Toward one o'clock in the morning."

At my request this young lady wrote out her story of the occurrence and signed it.

It was the first time I had tried an experiment of this sort, and I was greatly struck by its full and complete success.

It was not my will power alone that was brought into play, for I was also conscious of a mysterious influence which flowed through my whole being, and I had the impression of making use of a power I had not been conscious of up to that time.

¹² A. de Rochas, *L'Extériorisation de la Sensibilité* (Paris, 1895); H. Durville, *Le fantôme des vivants* (Paris, 1909); Georges de Dubor, *Le mystère de l'Hypnose* (Paris, 1920). See also G. Delanne, *Les Apparitions Matérialisées des vivants et des morts* (Paris, 1909); Leadheater, *L'autre côté de la Mort* (Paris, 1910); A. Primot, *La psychologie d'une conversion* (Paris, 1914); the works of Reichenbach, etc.

¹³ See *Les Forces naturelles inconnues*, p. 460.

¹⁴ *Ib.* p. 101.

¹⁵ *Phantasms of the Living*, I, 104. *Hallucinations télépathiques*, p. 38.

Miss Verity told of the occurrence in the following words:

I saw Mr. B— distinctly, in my room, toward one o'clock in the morning. I was perfectly awake and was much terrified; my screams woke my sister, who saw the apparition also. Three days afterward, I had an opportunity to tell our friend what had happened to me. For some time I did not recover from the shock I had received, and the remembrance of it is too vivid ever to be erased from my memory.

L. S. Verity

The younger sister wrote in her turn:

I remember the occurrence my sister tells of. Her account is absolutely exact. I saw the apparition that she saw, clearly and under the same circumstances.

E. E. Verity

Still a third person gave, from her angle, similar confirmation. The two sisters had seen their friend in evening dress.

These three different bits of testimony allow us to cast no doubt upon the experiment. Moreover, a special investigation of the English Society for Psychological Research has shown its perfect authenticity.

The following experiment was published in the same collection of documents:¹⁶

Mr. H. P. Sparks and Mr. A. H. W. Cleave were both students in the School of Naval Engineering at Portsmouth. The former writes:

For the last year I had been in the habit of hypnotizing one of my comrades. After a few trials, I perceived that the sleep grew deeper when I made long passes with my hands, after the subject was already asleep. It was then that, in this particular kind of hypnotic sleep, he believed he saw the places which interested him.

Last Friday evening (January 15, 1886) my friend expressed a desire to see a young girl who lived at Wandsworth, and to be seen by her. I hypnotized him and continued to make passes for about twenty minutes, concentrating all my will power upon his idea. When he came to, he declared that he had seen her in the dining-room, that she had seemed to him agitated, that she had gazed at him and had covered her eyes with her hands. Last Monday evening (January 18th) we began the experiment again, and this time he declared it his belief that he had terrified the young girl, for, after gazing at him, she had fallen into a sort of swoon. Her brother was then in the room.

Wednesday morning my friend received a letter from this young woman, asking if anything had happened to him; she said that on Friday night she had been seized with fear at seeing him standing in her room. She had thought this might be an imaginary vision, but the following Monday she had been still more frightened to see him again, this time more distinctly; she had even been frightened to the point of feeling almost ill.

The account that I am sending you is perfectly exact: I can prove it, for I have two witnesses who were in the dormitory at the moment when my friend was hypnotized and when he came to. The name of my subject is Arthur H. W. Cleave; he is eighteen years old. I myself am nineteen. A. C. Darley and A. S. Thurgood, our comrades, are the two witnesses of whom I have spoken.

H. Percy Sparks

The authors of "Phantasms of the Living," Messrs. Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, add that Mr. Sparks and Mr. Cleave are students in the School of Naval Engineering at Portsmouth, that they know them personally, and "can testify as to their intelligence and the care with which they are capable of observing."

All psychics have long revered the honored name of Frederic Myers (1843-1901), which we have just mentioned once more, lie related elsewhere¹⁷ that an experimenter wished to make an attempt of the same sort with the Reverend Stainton Moses, also well known. Here is the abridged account:

One evening last year (1878) I decided on an attempt to appear to Mr. Moses; I did not inform him in advance of my intention. I concentrated all my thoughts upon him with intensity, though I did not know where he lived. It was about midnight, and I ended by going to sleep. I had no knowledge of what might have taken place. When I saw Moses some days afterward, I asked him, "Did anything happen in your home Saturday night?" "Yes," he answered, "something most remarkable happened. I was sitting near the fire with So-and-So, smoking and talking. Toward half-past twelve my friend rose to take his leave, and I accompanied him to the door. I then came back to the fire to finish my pipe, when I saw you seated in the chair just left vacant by the man who had gone. I gazed at you attentively, then took up a newspaper to convince myself that I was not dreaming; and

¹⁶ *Phantasms of the Living*, II, 671. *Hallucinations télépathiques*, p. 45.

¹⁷ *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, 1907, p. 185.

when I put it down you were still there. While I was looking at you, without speaking, you disappeared gradually. I thought you must have been asleep at that hour; nevertheless, you appeared to me in your ordinary garments, just as I see you every day.”—“Capital!” I answered. “I wished to make an experiment: it succeeded. The next time I come, ask me what I want, for I had determined in my mind upon certain questions I wished to put to you; but I was waiting, probably, till you should ask me to speak.” Some weeks afterward, the experiment was repeated with the same success; this time, as well, I had not previously informed Moses. Upon this occasion he not only questioned me upon a subject which we had long discussed, but he held me back, by the influence of his will, some time after I had manifested a desire to leave. As on the first occasion, I retained no memory of the occurrence upon awakening.

Mr. Moses wrote on September 27, 1885, to confirm this story. He adds that those were the only circumstances under which it was his lot to see a living person in a place where that person was not. In considering this example, we again have the impression that it is, indeed, thought which is transmitted and which produces the customary image.

Baron de Schrenck, well known among psychics, succeeded with an experiment of the same sort in Munich, in February, 1887. Walking along a street, toward midnight, before a private dwelling in which lived relatives of his, he concentrated his will power, for five minutes, upon the person of a young girl, who saw him before her, to her great surprise.

I shall bring up still one more experiment, given in the “Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research” (New York, December, 1907), and vouched for by Professor Hyslop. This experiment took place in a hotel in the city of Buffalo. It was on a Saturday night. This is what occurred:

At one o’clock on Sunday morning (the clergyman Cl. W. S. wrote) I awakened from a deep dreamless sleep with the feeling that there was some one in my room. When I was thoroughly awake, I saw my wife standing at the foot of my bed. She had on a dress she wore ordinarily when, in the morning, she was busy with household duties.

I sat up and cried, “What are you doing there?” She answered, “I came to get news of you.” She then advanced to the foot of the bed, leaned toward me, embraced me, and disappeared. Immediately I sprang up: the room was absolutely dark; no one was there. I lit the gas; I was trembling, and a cold sweat bathed my whole body.

The following morning, when breakfasting with Dr. K. and Mr. P., I spoke to them of this occurrence. I was so overwhelmed, despite all the dictates of reason which I brought to bear, that I decided to send a telegram to my wife, but without daring to explain to her openly that she was my real concern. Some hours later I received her reply, “We are all well.”

When I returned home, several days afterward, I was at once struck by the fact that my wife was particularly interested to know if I had slept well on Saturday night. After some questions and answers not to the point, I ended by asking her why she put these questions to me. She then confided that she was reading Hudson’s “Psychical Phenomena,” in which it is said that if a person, at the precise moment when he loses consciousness in falling asleep, fixes his thoughts upon another person and wishes to appear to that other person under certain conditions, the latter will experience the impressions the experimenter wishes to make him feel.

After having read this passage, she had fixed her mind upon the desire to appear to me and to embrace me.

Such is this odd experiment. The questioning of the pastor and his wife, separately interrogated, proved its exactitude.

The clergyman asked his wife not to repeat this sort of attempt on Saturday night, because it upset him for his work on Sunday.

Is there not a remarkable analogy between this woman being borne to her husband and the case we gave above,—that of Mrs. Wilmot going to see her husband during a sea voyage? These observations as to the transmission of thought and images do not date from our epoch of psychic research, as is generally believed. Let us recall, among others, that of Wesermann, which dates back for more than a hundred years (1817). It was related that more than once he had been able to impose dreams upon distant friends, and the matter was being discussed. One day, he decided to make a lady who had been dead for more than five years appear in a dream to one of his friends. He assumed that the friend was at home, but it happened that he had made a trip to another town, with a companion unknown to Wesermann.

Though they were at the time wide awake, and engaged in conversation, the experiment succeeded none the less: the two friends saw a form resembling the lady in question enter their room noiselessly, by a door which usually creaked, make a gesture of greeting, and go out. Here is this curious story:¹⁸

A lady, dead for five years, was to appear (according to Monsieur Wesermann’s desire) to Lieutenant N—. The time

¹⁸ *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, 1891, p. 226.

was set for a certain night, at half-past ten. Now, contrary to his usual habits, Monsieur N— was not at home, but at the house of a friend, Lieutenant S—. They were talking, that evening, of the French campaign when suddenly the door opened and the lady entered, dressed in white, with a black scarf, her head bare. She lifted her hand three times in a friendly greeting to S—, then, turning toward his comrade, she nodded

to him and went out at the door.

This occurrence was so extremely singular, — and unbelievable, — and it seemed so extraordinary to the narrator himself, that, in order that it might be proved with certainty, he wrote to Lieutenant S—, who lived about ten kilometers away, to ask him to make a statement concerning it. The reply tallied exactly with the preceding story.

It would be difficult to maintain that Wesermann really made the dead woman appear. The only alternative, it would seem, is to admit that his will acted upon the mind of his friend, and that this influence was transmitted from his friend to the latter's neighbor. That is much simpler and more logical than to suppose that the dead woman returned. My readers have already been able to estimate psychic influence. Have we not seen a hypnotist, wishing to undeceive a somnambulist who was convinced that she saw angels of heaven in her imaginary visions, show her angels seated about a table, eating a turkey? ("L'Inconnu," page 344.)

In this experimental case we are concerned with suggestion, which is well known. It is produced by the will of the hypnotist, who can make his subject see everything he wishes, and make him feel all imaginable sensations, — those of drunkenness, of nausea, — cause him to mistake pure water for absinthe, make him think he is struggling with a ferocious beast, etc. In most of the cases having to do with seers there is autosuggestion. That is quite obvious. But apart from hypnotic suggestion and autosuggestion certain cases perplexes greatly when we try to find a satisfactory explanation. Such is, for example, the following. I learned of it in April, 1899, from Professor H. Cuendet of Geneva, vice-president of the Geneva Society for Psychical Research, who wrote me:

The scene took place at Begnins, in the Canton of Vaud, on a Tuesday of the month of July, 1894. We were having dinner. A member of my family asked my father, pointing to a painting in water-color hung on the wall, "Whom is that a portrait of?"

"It's of my Grandfather Oswald," he answered. "Speaking of him, I remember the following anecdote: Oswald was the violin soloist in a Paris theater. One night, when he was leaving the theater (it was in the midst of the Revolution), he was stopped by sansculottists, and was, without doubt, about to suffer the fate of numerous victims of the Terror, when, by a sudden inspiration, it occurred to him to play the 'Ca Ira' on his violin. The fanatics, who had doubtless mistaken him for some one else, realized their mistake and released him."

It was the first time my father had ever told us of these facts. None of the persons present — I no more than the others — had ever heard it spoken of. I remarked upon this at that very moment.

Wednesday, the next day, while still in Begnins, I received two letters from Geneva, one from the medium of the experimental group of which I am a member, the other from my friend P —, a teacher belonging to this same group. It is to be noted — a strange coincidence — that the medium, without being at all related to me and mine, was named Oswald, as was my dead great-grandfather. Here, in substance, is what these two letters informed me:

Three days before, on Sunday, my friends were holding, in Carouge, a little place near Geneva, a séance in which the medium had a very distinct vision of a person clothed as people were during the Revolution. He had a violin in his hand and seemed surrounded by hostile people. Suddenly, he played upon his violin, and the medium heard the tune of "Ca ira. . . Ca ira. At that moment those who surrounded him and who showed themselves ill-disposed seemed to change their demeanor abruptly, and freed the violinist.

"Who were you when you were alive?" my friends then demanded.

"Oswald," the table answered, with rappings.

"Doubtless one of my relatives," observed the medium.

"No; a relative of Monsieur Cuendet," the table answered.

The medium Oswald, astonished, decided to write me in order to throw light on the occurrence. My friend P— also made the same resolution. Whence the two letters in question. One may imagine my stupefaction when I received them.

I have already said that the medium was not in any way related to me or mine. Is it necessary to add that my friends in the group had never heard this story spoken of, — still less than I, who had not known it until that day? They know, moreover, nothing or almost nothing, of my family, have never had any connection with my father, and were far from supposing that I had had relatives of the name of Oswald.

Therefore, *two days before me* they had had through the medium, whose astonishment equaled theirs, a communication of a fact that had remained buried in my father's memory for long years, a fact — I cannot repeat this too often — unknown to

them as it was to the medium and to myself.

Given these conditions, an explanation through telepathy would seem to me extremely difficult to concede as true.

H. Guendet

(Letter 603)

Since I knew of cases of unconscious telepathic communication between the living, for example that of Dr. Nicolas of Corfu (Volume I, page.153), I wrote to Monsieur Cuendet for a special investigation. Here is his reply:

The medium had never gone to Begnins, in the Canton of Vaud. He had, therefore, never seen this portrait, the only one of my great-grandfather that we possess.

While on this subject, I must add that several weeks after the letter he had sent me, the medium came for the first time to pay us a visit at Begnins, where we are spending our summer vacation; I then had the curiosity to put him before the previously mentioned portrait, without any warning.

“Why,” he said, “that’s the person I saw, with a violin in his hand!”

What are we to conclude? As we remarked above, there is in this case neither hypnotic suggestion nor normal auto suggestion. The direct interpretation would be that the dead Oswald, living at the time of the Revolution, really manifested himself. But it would be unwise to be so easily contented with this solution. We still have comparative investigations to make. Have we not good reason to think that the whole of human psychology is, as yet, unknown?

Is it not possible that Monsieur Cuendet’s father should have thought of the story of his grandfather for several days, and that his thoughts radiated far enough about him to reach the medium? A daring hypothesis, certainly, but not one to be rejected on principle. We have examples of images projected by thought which would seem to justify it. *We are living in the midst of a psychic atmosphere unknown to us.*

I am sometimes accused (above all, by certain spiritualists with preconceived convictions) of being over-exacting in my interpretations, of not easily affirming the influence of spirits.

But I ask people not to lose sight of this: the aim of our metaphysical researches is the attempt to apply to these facts, still so mysterious, the principles of the experimental method, — severe principles that allow of no evasions. If the science of astronomy is the most exact and the most positive of all human realms of knowledge, this is due to the precision of its methods of reasoning, which have had, too, so beneficent an influence on those sciences with which astronomy has come in contact, such as optics, physics, the making of instruments of nice construction, etc. One acquires the habit of being satisfied only with that which has been verified, and of applying a mathematical rigor to all researches. A mathematician, an astronomer, a physicist, a chemist must, above all, reason truly, precisely, like a calculating-machine which never deviates from the basic fact that two and two make four. It becomes a mental habit, and we must try not to abandon this rule of conduct to which the sciences founded upon observation owe their value and their progress. It is, indisputably, this method of reasoning alone which may establish the psychic sciences, until now so vague and uncertain, upon a solid, unshakable foundation. But its application is not always easy. At any rate, let us always be fair, impartial, and conscientious.

Phantasms of the living, apparitions of the dying — and even of the dead — were considered by Schopenhauer to be a sort of projection of the will. Let us listen to him for a moment on this subject. He writes¹⁹:

It is enough for a person to think of us with strength and intensity to conjure up in our brains a vision of his form, not only through imagination, simply, but in such wise that this vision presents itself to us as a corporeal image, that we should not know how to distinguish from reality. The dying, in particular, manifest this power, and appear in consequence, at the hour of death, to their absent friends, — to several at once, and in different places. The cases have been so often affirmed and attested in various quarters that I consider them certain beyond a doubt.

He cites a great many examples. For him, phantasms are always subjective images produced in the minds of those who see them, but have no real existence. He does not admit that the soul is a substance which may detach itself from the body during life, or after death. “It is imperative,” he says, “that spiritualism be replaced by idealism.”

It seems to me that in this case Schopenhauer was mistaken.

¹⁹ *Mémoires sur les Sciences occultes* (Paris, 1912), p. 249.

I have just skimmed through the work of Jung-Stilling, the pages of which he cites. This psychologist was a professor at the University of Heidelberg and Marburg and Aulic Councilor to the Grand Duke of Baden. In it there are, indeed, curious accounts of apparitions, but also much dreaming and error. One can see that he did not understand astronomy, and that he believed the earth to be motionless in the center of the universe!

Schopenhauer here seems to have been determined not to admit an *objective* external reality, while admitting with certainty a subjective reality, but the examples that he gives show him to be entirely in the wrong. Thus, he tells of the occurrence related by Dupotet in his "Traité complet de magnétisme animal" (1856, page 561). When we open this work we read in it of the visit, made in a dream, by Mr. Wilson of Toronto, who showed himself as a phantasm in a house of the town of Hamilton, was received there by a man servant, asked for a glass of water, and told the *valet de chambre* to express to the lady of the house his regrets at not having seen her. That was on May 19, 1854. Ten days afterward he went into this house, *where the servants recognized him*.

As another example he cites the case of a writer for the "Telegraph" who, in Ausonia, received a visit from a Mr. Bailey of Philadelphia; the latter vanished after having spoken this sentence to him: "A thick cloud has spread itself over the terrestrial destinies of mankind." The next day, he met this same man in a railway carriage; he conversed with him, and his interlocutor ended his talk with these words: "A thick cloud has spread itself over the terrestrial destinies of mankind." In most cases, the apparition gives a complete impression of being real, of flesh and blood, even to several persons at once, and not to the person of whom the visitant might have been thinking; since, in the case of the visit to the lady of Hamilton the servants saw it, not the absent mistress of the house. The problem is more complex than supposed by Schopenhauer (who, it may be said in passing, strongly denied that he was a German, declaring that nationality "despicable to the last degree").

But let us draw conclusions from this chapter on *phantasms of the living*.

This accumulation of testimony, which I might augment considerably with a series of like documents²⁰ actually before my eyes, leads us to admit two kinds of phantasms, (1) those due to projections of thought acting upon the brains of percipients who are more or less in harmony with these projections; (2) those which are exterior, real, objective. The human being may have a duplicate form analogous to the ordinary one; this form may detach itself from the body, take on a certain consistency, become visible, even tangible, may speak, and may produce mechanical effects.

In order to deny this logical conclusion, we should have to admit that all the observed cases are false, are either lies or subjective hallucinations without reality, which would seem manifestly impossible.

It may be answered that the conclusion we put forward is still more inadmissible by its strangeness, and that in any case, since these phenomena are very rare, they throw no new light upon our knowledge of how a human being is constituted.

But, on the contrary, it is precisely the anomalies which reveal unknown realities, as do irregularities in the motions of heavenly bodies in astronomical science.

But what can these *phantasms* be?

I repeat that, so far as I am concerned, what puzzles me most is the fact that they are clothed.

If we admit that there are three elements in a human being, — the material body which every one knows, the soul or thinking spirit, bound up with a subtle intermediate body, as Egyptian theology formerly acknowledged, — it would seem that this subtle, ethereal body (spiritual, to use St. Paul's expression), a kind of soul-substance, should have no form, or else, if the conditions of organic terrestrial life imposed one upon it, this form should be that of the human body, of the nude body, man or woman.

What prevents this? What clothes them? Decency?

No. In nature, as in truth, there is neither shame nor in decency. These are conventional sentiments that are absolutely artificial.

A fluid phantasm of a human being, an ethereal or astral body, with a blue blouse, a hat or a cap, a burnoose, a straight skirt or a crinoline, according to the fashion, yellow or green gloves, a cane or an umbrella, is grotesque and incomprehensible.

²⁰ See, among others, Saint Augustin, *Cité de Dieu*, XVIII, 18.

It will be said that this is to insure recognition. But is not the face enough? Moreover, should not an astral body be vague, showing simply the general form of the body, without details?

The fact of the garments alone might lead us to reject the real existence of these phenomena and to think that these apparitions, these specters, exist only in the minds of observers.

This interpretation, however, presents great difficulties. In the cases which have just been related, for example, we should have to assume that the forty-two pupils of Mademoiselle Sagée's school were the victims of an hallucination, or that the narrator told us an untrue story; that all Miss Clary's family had imperfect eyesight; that the two maid-servants who saw Miss Jackson's double warming itself at the kitchen stove were the dupes of an illusion, despite the conclusive investigation made by Dr. Wyld; that Mr. Wilson did not speak, nor Mr. Bailey, nor the clergyman's wife, nor Madame Kruby's Dr. B—; that Mrs. Wilmot was not seen by her husband's companion in the cabin of the ship; that the experiments of Crookes, auscultating the phantom Katie King, so tangible and so feminine, were farcical, etc. In a word, we should have to reject all these observations because we do not understand them. Those are not our principles.

Perhaps the series of facts that we have to examine will enlighten us. Let us not despair; let us amass our observations, let us compare, analyze, investigate.

In any case, the testimony seems to me sufficient to affirm the reality of the existence of phantasms.

But let us acknowledge that there yet remain many mysteries to be cleared up. The violinist of 1793 is merely a forerunner of them.

A certain number of philosophic and religious systems, since the time of the Rosicrucians, the theophilanthropists, the Swedenborgians of the eighteenth century, up to the theosophists of the twentieth, present teachings as to the astral body, the mental body, the fluid body, and apparitions that are in harmony with our present deductions. Our deductions will teach nothing to the followers of these religions; they will understand that the aim of this work is the establishing of proofs that are experimental, scientific, and positive, beyond refutation; upon them the religion of the future will be founded, instead of upon revelations declared contrary to reason, upon words, upon metaphysical reasoning. It seems to me that if one of the mummies lying in the Egyptian sarcophagi of the museum of the Louvre should return to life today and read this chapter, it would find nothing new here.

Our conclusions may be summarized thus: apart from thought-forms, subjective phantasms, all those who have given themselves the trouble of studying the question have experimentally proved the existence of real, objective phantasms. In the case of the first there is thought-transmission, the transference of mental vibrations by the action of the will. In the case of the second there is activity in the realm of the material. In the present state of science any definitive explanation is impossible.

Whatever the explanation may be in the future, these investigations teach us, above all, a very evident truth, — that there are still many things to be learned, that science is not a finished book, that we are extremely ignorant, and that the nature of human beings, of life, of death, remains for us an interesting mystery to be fathomed.

For the moment, we divine that thought generates images projected to a distance. We shall prove it by our positive method, and the observations given will put us on the road to apparitions of the dying and the dead.



THOUGHT AS A GENERATOR OF IMAGES PROJECTED TO A DISTANCE

*The word supernatural applied
to a fact is an absurdity.*
Alfred Russell Wallace

Phantasms of the living have shown us images produced by thought; we shall have numerous examples of this fact in manifestations of the dying and the dead.

Round and about death, various unexplained happenings take place, an attentive study of which will bring us gradually to a knowledge of what exists after death. Such are, among others, apparitions of the living and the dead dressed as when one knew them, whose looks, demeanor, and clothing present veritable enigmas. We shall not put these observations in the class of manifestations that take place after death, although a discussion of them would indubitably seem to lead us to that classification; we shall investigate them in complete freedom and try to understand them.

The soul is a substance, a reality, like an atom of oxygen, of nitrogen, of iron, of radium, but without extent in space: a subtle entity beyond our conceptions of material measurements of weight; a psychic atom, a thinking atom, an energy-atom.

It is joined to the body by a fluid organism, certain manifestations of which we have just seen in the phantasms investigated in the preceding chapter; other aspects of it will soon present themselves for examination.

Your body is not your absolute ego. Your spirit is the force which moves it, through an invisible organism, one totally distinct from the body, endowed with special senses, — sight, hearing, touch, *and others*, — of a psychic order.

Every thought acts with more or less intensity, virtually as an agent that is called “material” acts, — as a projectile, a stone, a bit of metal, — and may project itself afar. If a man thinks of a murder, he emits into the air a murder-element.

A telepathic apparition of some one living or dead may have an objective and real origin. It may also be subjective, in the mind that perceives it, and in the being whence it emanates, which would explain the existence of garments. Let us investigate.

Certain apparitions seem, very often, to be projections of a sort, animated telephotographs, cinematographic pictures. A human being, such as he is, or such as he conceives himself to be, projects his image to a distance, with his clothing. It is auto projection.

A thought, an image, an impression, an emotion, existing in the mind of a person, may wake a similar impression in the mind of another person. This fact, proved today, certainly lessens the difficulty as to the clothing and the accessories of “spirits,” Since it is natural that a mental impression should depict a person under his habitual aspect. The observed apparitions and manifestations correspond to something objective and real, as the image reflected in a mirror corresponds to reality and shows its true aspect. But the problem presents a question complex enough.

Our thoughts act materially and carry with them a kind of effluvium. They may stamp themselves upon an object, upon a sheet of paper. One day, at the Salpêtrière Hospital, in 1889, I made some experiments, together with Charcot. He asked me to take up a pack of white cards, to choose one of them, to imagine that my portrait was upon it, and to show this portrait to a certain nervous invalid. I then made upon the back of the card a mark that the hypnotized woman did not see, I shuffled the cards, and held them before her without turning them around, and asked her to try to find my portrait upon them.

She succeeded at once; this struck me as amazing enough. And she wished to take this white card to her room, and keep it as a souvenir, positively seeing my portrait upon it.

The hypnotist was there, it is true. But, after all, the authenticity of the hallucination was incontestable.

Even though we are sure that it is impossible for us to explain everything, we are always seeking to learn.

My friend Colonel A. de Rochas wrote me in February, 1904, that in hypnotizing two young girls of Voiron he had noted that one of them was able to exteriorize her phantasm at will, and that both girls saw it, this phantasm assuming the aspect that the young girl wished to give it. This point, he remarked, is very important, for it would indicate that these forms are in the mind, the thoughts, and the memory of the medium producing them. Oliver Lodge has already suggested that “garments appear because they are imagined.” (Speech of January 31, 1902, to the Society for Psychical Research).

It is not to be doubted that thought produces images and gives birth to apparitions.

From among the curious facts which my readers have already weighed I shall repeat this one, taken from a letter which was sent me from the Bouches-du-Rhône, in 1899 (Letter 715, “L’Inconnu,” page 185):

On May 31, 1895, my eldest son, a volunteer with the First Hussars, at Valence, was taking part in field maneuvers. Being at the head of the advance-guard, he was walking his horse, making observations of the country occupied by the assumed enemy, when suddenly, from an ambushade, a bullet struck my unhappy son full in the chest. Death came with almost lightning swiftness.

The man who had involuntarily caused this fatal accident, seeing his comrade drop the reins and topple over upon the neck and shoulders of his horse, hurried toward him to hold him up, and was able to catch the last words that the dying man breathed out in a sigh: “You’ve hurt me badly — but I forgive you. For God and country always — present!” Then he died.

Now, this same day, May 31, 1895, about half-past nine in the morning, while my wife was at home, busy with household duties, our little daughter, then aged two and a half, went up to her mother and said in her childish speech:

“Mamma, look at Godfather [my eldest son was his sister’s godfather]; look, Mamma, look at Godfather. I’m having fun with him.”

“Yes, darling, have your fun,” her mother answered, attaching no importance to the child’s words.

But the little girl, in the face of her mother’s indifference, redoubled her insistence, and added: “But, Mamma, come and see Godfather. *Look at him, he’s there.* Oh, how nicely he’s dressed!”

My wife noted that in speaking to her in this way the child was as though transfigured. She was affected by it at first, but soon forgot this little scene, which had lasted only a few minutes, and it was not until two or three days afterward that she recalled all the details.

Shortly before noon we received a telegram telling us of the terrible accident that had happened to our beloved son, and I found out later that this incident had occurred toward eight o’clock.

Rougé,

Villa des Tilleuls, Salon, Bouches-du-Rhône.

This vision of the child is not the least interesting vision; it would be difficult to apply to it the so-called explanation of hallucination on the part of a percipient, and the phantom’s uniform, as well as the coincidence with the death, are so many guaranties of the reality of the phenomenon.

I can see scarcely any possible explanation of the facts other than this:

When dying, the young man must have seen his home again, and the child, and this thought reached her. The little girl saw her godfather, just as he was, in his military uniform. It was not the child’s spirit which was borne afar, as in certain cases, for she would have seen the accident; it was the dying man’s thought which struck the child.

This is an example of thought as a generator of images: in this case the phantom’s garments should not surprise us.

Such a direct projection seems to me more probable than a series of circular waves reaching every brain.

It is the same in the case of which we are about to read. This concerns the apparition of a dying person, its authenticity equally indisputable, told of by Metzger in his book “*Essai de spiritisme scientifique.*”

A physician (Dr. Rowland Bowstead of Caistor) tells of the following personal experience:

I was playing cricket. A ball which I should have caught rolled over to a low hedge. I ran toward it, with a comrade. When I had drawn near the hedge I saw on the other side of it my brother-in-law, to whom I was greatly attached. He was dressed in hunting-costume, and carried a gun on his arm. He smiled and waved to me. I told my comrade to look at the apparition, but he saw nothing, and when I wished to fix my gaze upon it again it had disappeared. Greatly depressed, I went up

to my uncle's home and told him what I had just seen. He pulled out his watch: it was ten minutes past one.

Two days afterward I got a letter, from my father, telling me of the death of my brother-in-law, which had occurred at precisely that time. His death came about in a curious way. The morning of that very day, since he was feeling fairly well, after an illness, he had declared that he was able to go hunting. Then, having taken up his gun, he had turned toward my father and had asked him if he had sent for me. My father having answered in the negative, he had flown into a rage, and had said that he would see me, in spite of everything. Suddenly he fell down as though struck by lightning, a blood-vessel in his lungs having burst. He was wearing at that time a hunting-costume and had a gun on his arm, exactly as in the apparition that had startled me.

Why this apparition, and how explain it, in this costume, with this hunting outfit, a gun on its arm?

There is here a whole series of questions. Our adversaries will answer them by saying that the story is not true, that there was, in this case, only an hallucination. This is simple enough. But it is no solution. The facts we have; the real, complete explanation remains to be found.

We may seek it.

It was during an argument concerning his brother-in-law that this man, leaving for the hunt, suffered a congestion. He was, then, thinking of him. We may suppose that an ether-wave, leaving his brain, struck upon that of his brother-in-law. We would have rejected this idea scornfully fifty years ago: wireless telegraphy justifies it today. And even if it were not justified, our duty is not to deny facts.

Was this an apparition of the astral body? No. Let us not seek so far field. This case is the same as the preceding one. The hunter's image was borne to the percipient's brain, just as the godfather's image, told of a moment ago, was borne to his little goddaughter.

Another example, also especially remarkable, is that of a drowned man appearing to his brother, with soaked garments, at the moment of drowning:

Commandant Mennelshisch was talking, in his room, with another officer, when he saw his brother Georges enter and sit down, with his clothes running water. He was at sea, and his ship was sinking at that very time.

These apparitions are projections emanating from the soul of the dying. They assume the forms taken by the dominating idea of the person who appears. The last thought of the drowned man was of his brother. He appeared clothed in wet garments because his garments must have hampered his efforts and have impressed upon him the idea of the hindrance he felt. There was no trace of moisture on the spot in which he had been, though they had seen water running from his clothes.

We have, then, in this case, too, an image projected to a distance, like a photograph transported by an unknown force. If photography had not been invented, or the telegraph, or electric transmission, we should understand nothing of this. But, for all that, these facts would none the less exist.

These transmissions of images are more numerous than one thinks, very varied and often complex. Here is one of the most curious examples, an account of which was sent to me very recently by the observer himself.

A man who believed himself at the point of death (who believed himself dead, even) appeared at a distance, made his position known and transmitted his thoughts. This personal observation, absolutely authentic, was made by the narrator himself, who was sufficiently versed in psychic studies to appreciate their value. In thanking him for this communication, I take pleasure in acknowledging also a debt of gratitude to my erudite friend Monsieur R. de Maratry, to whom I owe my knowledge of the document, received from London on September 19, 1920. We shall examine it with a very particular interest.

For a certain number of years I have been at the head of a group of young men, most of whom regarded me a little as a relative, a guardian, on account of the interest I had always taken in them as well as in their families. Several of them made the supreme sacrifice during the war, and I have been the intermediary for several in bearing messages of consolation to their bereaved parents.

On July 12, 1918, I was with a friend, a Miss X—, in her drawing-room, and we were talking of indifferent things, when she said to me suddenly: "It seems to me that one of your young men wishes to communicate with you. He is a tall fellow, dark, in khaki; his shoulder is turned toward me, so that I can see the letters 'R. E.' on it, very distinctly."

I remarked that I knew only one young man corresponding to this description, belonging to the corps of Royal Engineers, named W. M—, and that I did not believe him dead.

Miss X— answered, smiling, "He says it is really he, but (he is smiling) he thought you would call him by the

nickname by which he was known to those near to him.”

I answered at once, “Why, Father [such was the nickname], it’s news to me, indeed, to learn that you are dead!”

Then he related that he had been buried alive in his underground shelter by the caving in caused by a German shell, and that he was still there; my interlocutor, a seer, a sensitive, a medium, told of the suffering she herself experienced, similar to that felt by the young soldier. She asked him for what reasons he had manifested himself to them.

“It was,” he answered, “because in fainting away it seemed to me that my brother Jock would soon rejoin me. He is leading a dissipated life in Egypt, and you are the only person,” he added, addressing himself to me, “whose advice, given without delay, might save him from this dangerous life.”

I promised to consider this wish favorably, although I imagined there would be great difficulty in tracing Jock, for I did not know the address of his family.

“Hasn’t he also a request to make concerning his other brother, Duncan?”

“No,” W. M— said; “Duncan is not in danger, and will come back home safe and sound.”

I promised once more to carry out the wish of the dear young soldier, and, having commended his soul to God, I said good-bye to him.

I immediately sought a means of entering into relations with young Jock. The most certain seemed to be to write to the daughter of the head of our gymnasium, who knew most of my young men and their families. I demanded that she help me in my search. Three days afterward I got a reply from her, expressing her regrets: she had tried in every quarter to trace the family in question, but without success.

Now, the next mail brought me a second letter, informing me that a moment after sending me the preceding message she had met a school friend, who had confided her anxiety: she had received no news of her fiancé, in Egypt. “Who is your fiancé?” she demanded. — “Why don’t you remember Mr. Jock M—?”

That was precisely the young man whose address I was seeking. Was this a chance coincidence, or may it not have been an intervention on the part of friends in the Beyond, who were witnesses of my difficulties?

After this odd occurrence I was able to obtain Jock’s address, and I wrote him an affectionate letter, informing him of his brother’s anxiety, and beseeching him to tell me if it were well founded, and if he did not think that, for the salvation of his soul, he would do well to change his mode of life.

During Christmas week of the same year I received, in my office, a business visit from Jock and his younger brother, Duncan. By another coincidence, not less singular than the first, they had met in the street in which their mother was living, one coming from France, the other from Palestine; each arriving at a different station and both in haste to reach their home in London.

Jock told me that my letter had reached him at a most critical moment, when, sickened by all the perversity of the life in Cairo, in which he was participating, he was hesitating between two alter natives, — either to put an end to his useless life, or to ask to leave for the front, with the armies in Palestine. My letter had made him reflect; he remembered our old relationship, and this memory saved him! That same day it was proposed to him that he drive the general’s automobile in Palestine, for he was well known as a particularly skilful chauffeur.

“But,” Jock added, “our brother Will is still alive. Yesterday our mother received a letter from him. I cannot understand how he could have sent you such a message. I believe in communication with the dead, but how was it possible that a psychic manifestation by a living person could take place, such as that you witnessed?”

“Your brother was certainly not dead,” I answered, “but he was menaced by death, and the fact that he implored my aid for you in such circumstances is sufficient proof in itself.”

And on that memorable night, at the precise moment at which he manifested himself, he was in a trench, and had seen most of his comrades blown up by the enemy’s fire as the Germans discovered their whereabouts more and more fully, and he was waiting, from second to second, until the last shells fired at their dugouts should reach him, in his turn.

He remembered perfectly that he had, at that moment, thought of all his family, of those he loved, of his home, and especially of his two soldier brothers, rejoicing in a belief that they might be spared, though he himself died. Now, at that very moment, the English artillery had sighted the enemy’s battery, had blown it up, and my young friend had been saved.

The other brother, Duncan, as to whom there was no anxiety, was killed three weeks after his visit to my office, when he was bearing important messages, as a liaison officer, through a zone violently raked by enemy fire.

Bernard H. Springett

14 Earl’s Court Square, London

(Letter 4271)

There are, in this account, several extremely striking facts:

1. The appearance of a living man, who believed himself at the point of death, a soldier on the English front in France, to a seer, a sensitive, a medium (whatever the word be). *Thought as the generator of an image.*
2. The fact that this soldier communicated with a friend, a guardian, whom he requested to watch over his brother, then in Egypt.
3. A combination of circumstances allowing the guardian to find the address of this brother.
4. This brother being sent to Palestine at the predestined time, as though psychic influences had guided events.
5. The hero of the apparition not being killed, as he had feared: the apparition of a living man.
6. The prevision that the third brother would return safe and sound to the paternal home, and the absence of any prevision that he would then be killed in the war.

Would it not seem that we have here the feeling, as in other cases that the invisible world acts, at times, on the visible world, and also that we do not know everything? Duncan did, indeed, return home; but he was killed afterward.

It is certain that when a man known for his intelligence, his learning, his sureness of judgment, and his sincerity, tells us of an observation which he himself has made, this testimony warrants our conviction. If an astronomer sees an aërolite leave the vicinity of Vega, pass toward Arcturus, and there become extinguished, if he has determined its course on the dome of heaven, he will not allow his observations to be doubted on the pretext that he alone made them. Since Mr. Springett's account, that we have just read, bears in itself all the marks of veracity, I might well have wished no confirmation of it. Nevertheless I have always taken care to reinforce my own personal convictions by the proper investigation, and I must say that, with very rare exceptions, the exactness of the narrations I have received has always been confirmed.

In the preceding case it seemed to me that it would be helpful to obtain an independent personal account from the individuals connected with these psychic observations. The words "Miss X—," "W. M—," "Jock M—," "Duncan M—" hardly satisfy us. I therefore asked the writer to be good enough (1) to give me the full names on condition of not making them public, if the family preferred it; (2) to ask Miss X— to send me, herself, a separate account, according to her own recollections. My request was graciously received and acted upon. On October 29, 1920, Mr. Bernard Springett sent me all the names and pertinent documents and Miss X— a narration signed by herself, Julia Smith, Cyprus House, Havre des Pas, Jersey, where she was then living, without asking me to conceal her name. Though told in very different terms from those of Mr. Springett, her description of the scene was identical. The young soldier William M— (his family, which is Scotch, would not wish to see his name made public) — this young soldier believed himself dead. Here are the medium's phrases, word for word: "I asked, 'Have you passed over?'" The answer was 'Yes.' — 'How?' I asked. — 'I was buried by earth falling on me.'"

Thus he believed himself dead, entombed by the caving in of the trench.

We feel, from Mr. Springett's comments, that we are here concerned with facts religiously observed and scrupulously garnered by austere Christians. He concluded:

I am a humble believer in the divine authority which, in these last years, has allowed us to communicate with those who have passed into the Beyond — clearly, to the end that they may attain perfection.

(Letter 4292)

It is not to be doubted that the soldier who believed himself dead, but who was not, and who is now living, thought of his spiritual guardian, Mr. Springett; nor is it to be doubted that this thought conjured up for the seer a visible image. Nevertheless there is not, in this case, a phantasm like those we studied in the preceding chapter, there is a different thing, — a thought that gave rise to an image projected to a distance.

The following case of image-projection may be compared to it. As in the case of the experience of which we have just read, we are concerned with apparitions seen in a state of wakefulness, and not in dreams:

One morning, some months ago, when I was in bed, wide awake, my eyes turned toward a mirror near me. In one of its panels I saw, very distinctly, the head and features of a person whom I had known very well some years before, — a most friendly relationship which had been broken off in consequence of calamitous circumstances.

This person had left Geneva for her own distant country, and I had never had any news of her.

When I saw her in the mirror, looking at me fixedly, I felt, though frightened, a certain happiness; I sat up in bed, talking to her, asking her if it were really she. Her features, rather hard, softened, her eyelids fluttered with pleasure, and a peaceful smile appeared on her lips.

I kept on looking at her, but the vision vanished. Some days afterward, I learned that this person had died at that precise date.

Madame Antoine Hornung

Geneva.

(Letter 611)

According to this account, the vision lasted long enough to make the hypothesis of a hallucination very improbable. We may guess that at the moment of death a thought was irradiated with intensity, and projected its image to a distance.

I have already told of the folk apparition of a mother to her son, from Bologna to Modena, while her other son was with her in Bologna:

At the age of twenty I was studying in Bologna, while my brother had just entered the military academy in Modena.

One evening, before going to bed, my mother complained of a slight indisposition and showed herself rather uneasy as to her absent son. But, being above all good, sweet, and resigned, she withdrew quietly into her room, after kissing me tenderly as usual. Our bedrooms were communicating. I spent a part of the night on a difficult piece of work, and only toward morning did I succeed in dozing off.

Abruptly, I was awakened by the sound of a voice, and, opening my eyes, I was struck to see, in my room, my own brother, pale, his face agitated. "Mother," he murmured; "how is she? At ten minutes past twelve I saw her distinctly at the foot of my bed in Modena; she smiled at me; with one hand she pointed to the sky, and with the other she blessed me. Then she disappeared. I am sure you, Mother is dead!"

I hurried into the hallowed room of our mother; she was, indeed, dead, a smile on her lips. Later the doctor told us that she must have ceased to live at about midnight.

E. Asinelli

(Letter 443)

We have here a very curious experience: the mother appearing to her distant son, and the son communicating with his brother, near the dead woman. This brother in Modena was suffering greatly from the separation, and was in continuous mental communication with her. It is possible, but not probable, that he was borne as a phantasm toward his brother, and spoke to him: we must suppose, rather, that he acted telepathically upon the brain of his brother, who believed he saw him and heard him: — the transmission of sensations.

We ascertain in this case, once more, the fact that *distance does not exist* in telepathy: space and time disappear so far as our sensations are concerned.

"Phantasms" are certainly, at times, thought-productions projected to a distance.

We do not suspect the extent of our incarnate spirits' sphere of action. Recently I was looking over the works of the ancient hypnotists, and I noted an odd example of transmission to a distance, that we might call "Telepathy in 1822, in a Hypnotic Sensation of Odor." I found it among the observations of Beleuze, librarian of the Paris Museum of Natural History, and one of the masters of hypnotism at that time. He hypnotized a very sensitive subject, a young girl, who lived near the Théâtre Français (he himself lived on the rue Royale, near the Place de la Concord). Here is the account which he gave of observations made on September 9, 1822:

At half-past nine in the evening, as I was making a final draft of my latest interview with this somnambulist, I smelled, several times, puffs of the odor of a vulnerary. Since my wife and my daughter, who at this season are usually in the country, were by an unusual circumstance in Paris that very day, I went to see if an accident had happened to either one of them, — one that would have necessitate the use of the vulnerary. I found them very calm, and did not remark this odor where they were. I went back to my office; I experienced the same sensation. My maid-servant entered the room at this moment; nothing bad happened to her, either, and she did not even notice that there was an odor of any sort in my room. I then said to her, "I'm sure an accident has happened to one of my somnambulists, and that she is using a vulnerary."

The next day he went to verify this; it was the exact truth.

My readers will remember, perhaps, that I have related an experience of the same sort in "L'Inconnu"

(page 113). We may learn by comparing facts. Here it is:

Day before yesterday in my home, we were talking of your learned investigations. A person absolutely worthy of confidence told us that when she had been with her mother in her last moments she had, almost at the very instant of her death, sprinkled a great quantity of can do Cologne about the dying woman. At that same time the sister of the narrator, more than thirty leagues away, had the feeling that her mother was certainly dead, and she remarked an odor of eau de Cologne very distinctly, though no flask of this liquid was within her reach. This lady knew that her mother was very ill.

Octave Marals

Former president of the Barristers' Association of Rouen.

A most painstaking observer, Madame Laboissière, sent me, on November 28, 1920, from the Department of Loir-et Cher, certain noteworthy psychic documents, from which the following may be selected for this chapter:

I have always remembered — without, however, attaching any importance to it — a bizarre incident having to do with my poor son, killed in the beginning of the war, at the age of twenty, whose death was announced to me by the sounds of which I have told you. In his childhood, when he was at school, he had, during a play-hour, fallen on his wrist and hurt himself slightly. I was then in a field, two or three kilometers away: from three o'clock until four, I noticed an intense odor of camphorated brandy, that they had put on his little wound. How can that have happened? Had he thought of me?

(Letter 4332)

One might see in this only chance. Would this explanation suffice?

I know of only a small number of these observations as to the transmission of odors. Here is another, complicated by telepathic projection.

Monsieur Agniel, a member of the Morocco branch of the Astronomical Society of France, in sending me his observations as to the partial eclipse of the sun of November 10, 1920, wrote me, on that date, from Rabat:

Nineteen years ago it was the reading of "L'Inconnu" that completely changed my existence.²¹ From the materialist I was, I became a sincere propagator of the spiritualistic ideas which I have sought to fathom.

Allow me to report my own testimony touching upon the manifestations of our being acting at a distance. The facts concern me personally.

I have a sister of a most impressionable nature who lives in Nîmes. In 1906 I went to pay her a visit. I was then residing in Nice. I had taken an express that left toward midnight. My sister greatly loves orange-blossoms, and Nice, as you know, is the center of the region where this tree of the golden fruit flourishes. So I had gathered for her a flowery sheaf which I had put in the lug gage-rack opposite me. Its penetrating perfume kept me awake.

Having neglected to inform my sister, in advance, of my trip, I tried to make amends for my forgetfulness through telepathic channels. Alone in my compartment, I tried an experiment while the train was rushing along at full speed between Golfe-Juan and Cannes. Concentrating my thoughts on the flowers and then closing my eyes, I sent myself, mentally, into my sister's room in Nîmes, and spoke to her thus: "I am arriving. I am coming to see you and to bring you the flowers you love." I imagined myself at the foot of her bed, showing her my bunch of flowers, of which I formed a mental image.

At ten o'clock in the morning I got off the train, and at once I hurried to my sister.

"It's very odd," she told me, when she had kissed me. "I dreamed last night that you were coming and that you were bringing me orange-blossoms!"

"Capital!" I answered. "Here I am,—and there are the orange-blossoms."

I have often enough renewed this experiment with success, save once, when my sister had not gone to sleep at the time when I was experimenting.

I may add that this phenomenon of thought-transference is usual enough, and serves as mental employment in the theosophical world.

(Letter 4310)

Our colleague's sister could, of course, upon her brother's arrival, perceive the odor of orange-blossoms. The dream was no less authentic on this account.

Among these rare transmissions let us note the following:

²¹ *Entretiens sur le Magnétisme animal* (Paris, 1823), p. 189.

Monsieur Célestin Brémond, in Lyons, was separated from a medium, a woman with whom he had made experiments, by a distance of three hundred kilometers. He got a letter from her, telling him this:

I was with you, taking care of a dog with sore ears; I was giving him injections of a liquid I had prepared by boiling oak-bark mixed with walnut leaves; then I sprinkled the wounds with powdered gentian roots. Since I am afraid that some of you may be ill, will you please answer as soon as possible, to reassure us all, for, understanding nothing of this dream, we are uneasy.

Monsieur Brémond said:

No one of my little family was ill. On the contrary, we were all in splendid health; but this was not true of a dog, abandoned by his owners, that we had taken in. This animal had canker of the ears, from the inside of which was discharged an abundant, intermittent flow. Nevertheless, having taken the creature in, I did not wish, like his first master, to abandon him again to the unhappy lot of a stray, and I had resolved to try in every way to cure him. At that moment the idea came to me to write to this medium, whose special faculties find employment, above all, in healing the sick; still, I did not act on this plan at once. So I was greatly surprised when, two days afterward, I received the account of the aforementioned dream. *My thoughts had carried to a distance*, and, what is even more curious, the medium had seen with perfect accuracy, for, by applying the remedies indicated, I succeeded after some days in curing my dog. Such are the facts, in all simplicity.²²

The hypothesis of chance is, indeed, improbable.

May thought, imagination, fear, apprehension, *develop latent microbes* and bring on death by hydrophobia previously acquired? No, an anatomist would answer. Yet we may read in a book by Léon Daudet (“Le Monde des images,” page 196) of the following observations which he declared he had from his friend Dr. Vivier:

A peasant was going, with his brother, to the ship which was to take the latter to America. On the dock a mad dog bit the two men. The first, the one who remained and who knew the dog was mad, died six weeks afterward in terrible suffering. Upon the doctor’s advice, the family hid the cause of this death from the emigrant, who came back two years afterward, full of health and courage. When he disembarked he learned the true reason for the death of his brother, — and he died of hydrophobia six weeks after ward! Such are, with some, the organic effects of apprehension.

Another problem: can one hear a voice seven kilometers off? Certainly not. Now, the authors of “Phantasms of the Living” vouch for the following story:

October 17, 1883.

A young girl, a friend of my wife, lived with us in Australia, in the brush. She had been out horseback-riding for several hours (to the town where the post-office was, about twelve kilometers away). All of us — my wife and I who were at home, a man-servant, a maid-servant, and my adopted son, a young boy — heard this young person calling and crying out, “Oh, Johnnie Johnnie!” It was my boy’s name; he was the pretty horseback-rider’s constant companion. All of us went out of doors at the same time, but we heard and saw nothing. An hour afterward, when she came back, she told us that in a certain spot about seven kilometers away she had had to open a gate, had wished to do it without dismounting, and had leaned from the saddle to unhook a kind of ring. Something had frightened her horse, and he had leaped to one side, leaving her hanging on the gate. She told us that she called for help, and had imagined that Johnnie was behind her. When she had caught her horse again she reached our home unharmed by anything but fright. It would have been absolutely impossible to hear her voice across the wooded region between her and us. What seems strange to me is that the others, who have not the same mesmeric sensibility as I, should have heard the cry at the same time, and as distinctly.

All answered the call at once, by leaving the various buildings where they were working, and by making their way toward the entrance, thinking they would find the girl in some sort of trouble, and all were astonished not to see her even on the large plain bordered by the wooded space that she had to cross.

J. Wood Bilby

Mrs. Beilby confirmed this story as follows:

I remember perfectly that the voice was heard, as is told above by my husband. I can answer for the exactitude of the statement.

Catherine W. Beilby

Mr. Beilby added:

The house is isolated; there is no other residence within a radius of about five kilometers; no one was there at that moment, except the servants and the employees in this building.²³

²² *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, April, 1906, p. 318.

²³ *Hallucinations télépathiques*, p. 263.

In the case of the fact just related, a voice telepathically projected was certainly heard. What took place in the following case? The narrator attributes it to the efficacy of a prayer.

The “Mattino” of Naples published on April 22, 1906, the item here given, sent in by its Reggio (Calabria) correspondent:

The other day, at the central station of Reggio, a young seminarist boarded the Reggio-Battipaglia-Naples express, which leaves here at 5:55, and took his seat in a compartment in which was the comptroller-in-chief of the road, Signore Dominic Fischetti.

When the train had started, Signore Fischetti asked the seminarist what his destination might be. The latter answered that he had to go to Catona, to be present at the Festival of Saint Francis. The comptroller then gave the future priest to understand that he had made a great mistake, for the train in which he was did not stop at Catona, and in order to get off at that place he should have taken the other train, which leaves Reggio at 6:17.

One may imagine the grief and disappointment of the seminarist! He began to work himself up, to ask help, to pray to the Holy Virgin, with tears in his eyes; when his traveling companion confirmed what he had already said, he threatened to throw himself out of the door if the train did not stop at Catona.

All this time the train continued on its way. When they had got to the bridge, which is reached before the Catona station, they heard the repeated whistling of the locomotive and, immediately afterward, the emergency whistle. The train began to slacken speed, then finally stopped.

What, then, had happened?

The seminarist, full of joy, triumphant almost, threw himself from the railway carriage, crying out that Saint Francis had just worked a miracle in his favor, and the travelers on the train learned from the engineer, a certain Signore Tricepi, that the halt was due to the presence of a nun, clothed in white, and two other women, in the middle of the track; despite the whistling of the locomotive they had not stirred.

The passengers got off to see them, but saw no one, save the seminarist, running toward the station as fast as his legs could carry him.

Signore Fischetti, astounded, told what the young man had said, to the stupefaction of those who heard him; the engineer, in the most explicit way, gave assurance of having seen the three women on the track, motionless, immovable. Then, since no explanation of this strange fact could be given, talk of a miracle began.

Such is the highly veracious account furnished by a young employee of the railroad, in the presence of several persons; he added, as documentary proof, that the train’s extraordinary stop upon the Catona bridge is entered, according to regulations, on the daily record.

How can we explain the engineer’s act? May we assume a telepathic influence, leaving the seminarist’s brain, and producing a visual hallucination on the part of the engineer?

The same thing happened to me, without there being, it seemed to me, any occult cause.²⁴

All these observations remain highly enigmatical, despite telepathy, despite the saints, despite the Virgin Mary, despite prayers. Unknown forces come into play. Here, among others, is a letter, curious enough, telling of a dying man’s most extraordinary deed:

Grodno, Bessarabia, July 24, 1900.

This manifestation took place about seven years ago. Monsieur Paul Ménétche, together with an officer, was busy

²⁴ At a time when alterations were being made in the Amterlitz Station in order to extend the tracks to the quai d’Orsay, I was returning to my observatory in Juvisy on an evening train, toward ten o’clock. I took the wrong train, in consequence, I believe, of a change in the time of departure, and when I arrived at Juvisy I saw with chagrin that the train did not stop and went on toward Orleans. I expressed my despair to my fellow-passengers, adding: “Oh, if it could only slow down, I would jump off, for my wife would be most uneasy if I did not return, and, besides, I must positively observe Mars to-night.” The train slackened its speed, almost stopped, and I leaped out upon the track. Where was I? A small light was shining at a distance; I went toward it, along the track. A guard was there, and gave me the name of the station, Marolles. I made inquiries, and found out that a train was about to pass, on its way to Paris, but it was a fast train that would stop neither at Marolles nor at Juvisy. I asked the employee to give the signal to stop; I gave him my card; I got into the locomotive, with the engineer; I had him stop once more at the Juvisy station, telling him not to lose a moment more, but to make all speed for Paris. I did not think, until afterward, of how culpable my action was. Three legal charges were made: against the employee at Marolles, against the engineer, and against me. I declared myself, naturally, responsible for everything. The company at Orleans showed the greatest kindness, excusing me in the name of the Sky and in memory of a friend of France, Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil, who had recently made me a visit in my observatory. “It is usual,” I was told, “to allow for five minutes delay in the case of a sovereign. One day, when you brought Monsieur Raymond Poincaré to the station,” they observed, also, “the train was two minutes late. It is nothing of importance. There are exceptions to every rule.” Despite these gracious speeches, I promised never to do this again.

making powder-cases for fireworks, in the room of a hotel in Warsaw. In the evening he was the first to go down to the restaurant, leaving his friend to finish his work. The friend rejoined him soon. Ménéche demanded, "Well, did you put the cases away in my table drawer?" — "No," the officer replied; "I left them on the window-sill." — "That's a little imprudent," Paul remarked, and they said nothing more about it.

At midnight he went away from the restaurant, returned to his room, and left the officer in the company of his friends. He undressed, blew out his candle, and soon fell asleep.

In the course of the night he was suddenly awakened by a noise. He heard, distinctly, a door below open and shut, then steps making their way toward his room on the third floor. This made him a little uneasy; he sat up in bed and waited.

Then it was that his door, which he had locked, opened to let a cool wind come through, and he felt some one enter, pass softly near his bed with a little, cold puff of air, and halt before the window. There he heard the cases being moved about, and saw distinctly that some one was taking them up and putting them in the drawer of the table. Then the nocturnal visitant opened the door and closed it again, and his steps died away on the stairs.

Scarcely had this strange apparition disappeared, when P. Ménéche leaped from his bed, lit the candle, and ran to the window. To his great astonishment, he found all the cases there, as on the day before. He looked at his watch: it was two o'clock at night. He went back to bed, fell asleep again, and awakened late the next day. A servant of the hotel, entering, told him that at two o'clock at night the officer *had died suddenly in the restaurant*.

Hélène Schoulguine

(Letter 930)

We think at once that it must have been the narrator's dream. Yes, but this coincidence with death! Chance in the case of the dream and chance in the case of the death! No, this simple explanation no longer satisfies us. Then, too, it was not a dream, since he was awake, sprang from his bed, and went to substantiate. The experience seems to have occurred at the very time of the death. Was the officer on this or the other side of death's door? But what is "time"? Even in the case of sudden death the transformation takes several seconds. A second is long in certain electric measurements. He may have thought of the powder-cases, may have wished to go and look for them, may not have been able to take them up, being a phantom, but may, perhaps, have believed that he took them up. Whatever hypothesis one may put forward, the fact in itself shows us, as do our hundred observations that a human being is not made up of only the body and the senses which we know. There is something else. The thoughts of the dying man may have influenced the brain of the observer, who, by a repercussion, may have heard the door open, the steps of the visitant, the window, the cases, the drawer being moved,—everything that the dying man thought he was doing. How many queries! But the facts are there, to be explained. A new science.

These manifestations of the human soul, as yet so little investigated, are in their variety truly fantastic; our thought may project images to a distance, sensations of all sorts; we have already proved that by these strange "phantasms." Very naturally, we ask ourselves if we can be absolutely certain of all the observations, if there is not room for some illusions, some possible errors. Readers have always appreciated our critical sense and our method.

People say, sometimes: "Chance is such a great factor! It can do anything." No, not so great as that; it cannot do all things.

Let us simply make use of our reason, — always make use of it. Reason is superior to mathematics, even; mathematics does not govern living nature. One of our most clear sighted French philosophers, likewise one of our most learned mathematicians, D'Alembert, himself asks us to distinguish mathematical formula from vital phenomena. I have heard it maintained, by eminent mathematicians, that *according to the principles of the law of probability* one might admit that the arrangement of letters forming a poem such as, for example, Homer's "Iliad," or Dante's "Divine Comedy," could be brought about by chance. This reasoning seems to me simply absurd, even granting that the procedure was pushed to infinity during eternity. Let us revert to the simple good sense extolled in the first chapter. Here is, in this connection, what we may read in the works of D'Alembert:

Assuming that a thousand letters which one might find disposed upon a table form connected words and have a meaning, I ask, who is the man who would not stake everything in the world that this arrangement is not the result of chance. Nevertheless, it is absolutely evident that this disposal of words, with a meaning, is just as possible, *mathematically speaking*, as another disposition of letters which would have no meaning. Why does the first arrangement seem to us, indisputably, to have a cause, and not the second? If only for the reason that we tacitly assume that there is neither order nor regularity in things over which chance alone presides; or, at least, that when we see order, regularity, in something, a sort of design and plan, we would wager much more that this is not the result of chance than if one saw in it neither design nor regularity.

In order to elaborate my idea with still more nicety and precision [the French philosopher adds], I shall assume that we

find, upon a table, printer's letters arranged as follows:

Constantinopolitanensibus,
or aabceilnnnnnooossstttu,
or nbsaeptolnoiauostnisnictn.

these three arrangements containing absolutely the same letters. In the first arrangement they form a known word; in the second they do not form a word, but the letters are disposed in their alphabetical order, and the same letter is found there as many times, in succession, as the number of times it is found in the twenty-five letters which form the word Constantinopolitanensibus; in the third arrangement that are pell-mell, without order, and according to chance. Now, first, it is certain that, *mathematically speaking*, these three arrangements are equally possible. It is not less certain that every sensible man who looked at the table on which these three arrangements are assumed to be, would not doubt, or at least would stake everything in the world, that the first arrangement is not the effect of chance, and that he would not be much less disposed to wager that the second arrangement is not, either. Thus, this sensible man does not consider, by any means, the three arrangements as equally possible, *physically speaking*, though the *mathematical* possibility would be equal and the same for all three.²⁵

This reasoning is absolutely sound. Chance does not produce the psychic phenomena studied here. The intelligent action of spiritual forces, however inexplicable it may be to our comprehension, cannot be eliminated.

The observations just placed before our eyes show us the effects of thought. Not only visual images may be transmitted by telepathy, but also auditory and olfactory sensations, molecular movements, germs of death, cinematographic sensations. These transmissions generally come into play at the critical moments of life. The most critical moment of all is unquestionably that of death; upon old sun dials, one of the mottos which occur most frequently, to describe the hours, is this:

All strike;
The last kills.

It is at the hour of death that transmissions of images and of sensations are most frequent. Nevertheless, the general investigation that I have been able to make enables us to distinguish, amid the whole number, a certain number of manifestations and of apparitions of the dying preceding death by a considerable time. We shall ascertain the truth of these premonitory apparitions. They are singular enough, but no less instructive than the others.

²⁵ D'Alembert, *Doutes et questions sur le calcul des probabilités*: Ouvres de d'Alembert (Paris, 1821), 1, 458.



APPARITIONS OF THE DYING SOME TIME BEFORE DEATH

*Reject the common opinion
and you will be saved.
Marcus Aurelius*

The preceding examples of phantasms of the living, and of the transmission of images, have prepared us for what is to follow. Assuredly, no literary preparation, no rhetorical transition is necessary for the admission of facts. They exist or do not exist. But our regular classification demands methodical research, and the general plan of this work might have been foretold after the first pages of our first volume: to prove by observed facts, apart from any religious belief, and in complete and impartial freedom of judgment, the existence of the soul, its independence of the bodily organism and its survival.

Our method must preserve the same severity from beginning to end. Let us not be content with words, nor with illusions.

Human testimony is always debatable, and we must not accept it without rigorous examination. *Testis unus, testis nullus*, says the ancient Roman judicial adage: one witness is no witness. It is often the same with several. Nevertheless, there are exceptions. If I had been the only one to observe the total eclipse of the sun of May 28, 1900, I should be sure of its reality. Let us repeat, tirelessly, that in accepting statements the greatest circumspection must be maintained. How many times have people not come to me, to show me false aërolites — assuring me that they had seen them fall from the sky — which were only slaggy lava or more or less spherical masses of mineral matter which they had picked up, the day after the appearance of a meteorite, in the direction of its fall, which had taken place ten, twenty, thirty kilometers farther off! But we must not, through excess of skepticism, lose ourselves amid the errors of the academicians and the writers who denied the existence of meteorites until 1803 (the classic example of the fall of one near Aigle, in the Department of the Orne). “We must exact of our selves a rational scientific method in all investigations and most particularly in those which concern the phenomena, often incomprehensible, which we are here examining. Let us be circumspect, not blind.

But before going farther, I should like to answer an objection very natural to the analytic spirit of the scientific method. One might think that these coincidences have not the value we attribute to them, since, for one that is noted, a thousand dreams, a thousand presentiments have no consequences. This objection would be admissible if we were not here concerned with particular sensations, with exact facts, with circumstantial details, with incidents that could not be foretold, at times with the perception of scenes as real as if they had been photographed. The objection could not apply to the proof that the reader has had before his eyes in the first volume of this work; for example, to the pre sentiment of Madame Constans (page 68) refusing, despite her physician, to take a draft that would have poisoned her; or to the death of Madame Arboussoff (page 71); or to Garrison’s nocturnal journey, when he was summoned by his dying mother, twenty-eight kilometers away (page 75); or to Monsieur Porché-Banès’s clock (page 96) etc. Our convictions as to psychic transmissions will, moreover, be gradually strengthened by the facts themselves, facts absolutely consistent.

It is not only at the time of death that manifestations and apparitions occur; it is often before. It has seemed to me quite in order to put facts in chronological sequence on the one hand, and, on the other, for absolute clearness, to distinguish *apparitions* from various manifestations.

These observations are not merely of the present, but they have usually been disdained, been characterized as hallucinations, without trouble being taken to study them, to compare them, to examine them seriously.

The Duchess of Abrantès, who was born in 1789, and died in 1838, wrote her Memoirs under the Restoration. Junot, Duke of Abrantès, who was born in 1771 and died by suicide in 1813, appeared to his wife, after his attempt at suicide, but before his death, and this case merits our special attention. The woman who witnessed it tells it in the work I have just mentioned, in these words:

It was the night of July 22d-23d. I was sleeping uneasily, as in a feverish slumber, when I was gripped by a sensation such as I had never known, and painful, moreover.

I awakened and saw distinctly, near my bed, Junot dressed in the same gray coat that he wore the day of his departure

for Illyria, looking at me with a gentle and melancholy expression. I uttered a piercing scream which awakened Blanche (my head chambermaid who is still living) and Madame Thomières, who at once leaped from her bed and came to me, asking me what was the matter. Alas! I still saw this fearful apparition, for Junot's face was pale and profoundly sad; it seemed, already, as though we were separated here on earth! But what terrified me most was to see the apparition walking round my bed, and yet — heavens! — one of its legs was broken. At length, through an intense revelation, I saw Junot's condition; and yet no news had reached me or could reach me, since the event was taking place at that moment. And later on my brother long hesitated to tell me the truth, for he feared for my life, in the state I was in.

"Light up my room!" I cried, in my ever-growing terror. "Give me lots of air, — lots of light, above all!" and my gaze followed the apparition, still visible, that now approached me, now withdrew into a dark corner of the room, beckoning me to come to it. This sight made me believe at moments that I was going to die; then there escaped from my lungs a cry, hollow and prolonged, that seemed an appeal to Death. It was only toward morning that the apparition vanished by degrees, and grew to resemble a cloud, al most indistinct. I am not explaining this phenomenon; I am telling it as it was.

When, on July 30th, Albert, returning to Sécheron, told Madame Thomières of the terrible accidents that had preceded the duke's death, she could not restrain a cry of astonishment, and told him what had happened to me.

Even today I cannot thrust from my mind the thought that there was in this case a close connection between two souls bound by so many ties that they formed a single soul. I believe this, believe it firmly. The mysteries of Providence are too deep for our eyes to penetrate.

What shall we conclude from this story?

We said above that Junot had committed suicide. The grief caused him by the defeat of the French army in Spain, where he had received the title of duke after his capture of the city of Abrantès, a grief augmented by the rather cold reception accorded him by Napoleon upon his return, and by a sort of decline, had completely unnerved him. In the hope of recovery he had gone, in July, 1813, to Montbard, his father's home, when, in an access of fever, he threw himself out of the window and broke his leg. He died some days afterwards (July 29th). His apparition to his wife, after the accident and *before his death*, is a most striking case. The duchess was then on the shores of Lake Geneva, having gone there before her husband's return.

We can add to this incident a great number of like observations of *phantasms of the living*.

What we know today of telepathic communication convinces us that the Duchess of Abrantès was not the victim of a groundless hallucination, and that chance is not an admissible explanation.

Indisputably, Junot appeared to his wife six days before his death, exhausted, dying. It was not a phantasm like those of Liguori, of Mademoiselle Sagée, of Mrs. Wilmot, of Sir Came Raschse, of Mrs. Milman, of Miss Clary, and other objective phantasms: she alone saw it; it was a case of thought and image-transference analogous to those we considered in the preceding chapter; it was an apparition of a dying man, before death. Others will pass before our eyes.

My readers already know — and will see in detail farther on, in Chapter X — examples of the dead who came to announce their death even before it had happened, and who said calmly, "I am dead," when they were not, but when the event was imminent. The first of these examples of which I learned was that of René Kraemer, a cousin of the composer André Bloch ("L'Inconnu," page 70), who on June 12, 1896; appeared to his aunt, then in Rome, while he himself was in Paris. He appeared six hours before his death, and said to her, "Yes, I am really dead!" The young man, who was dying, was then in a state of coma.

Among examples of apparitions before death, here is a particularly remarkable one, in that it preceded death by two days, and that it followed upon a promise made, of which no one had thought. These curious observations were written out by Countess Eugénie Kapnist, and painstakingly discussed by the London Psychical Society.²⁶

Let us read them:

In Talta, in February, 1889, we made the acquaintance of Monsieur P— and his wife, when we were spending the evening at the home of friends we had in common, who had insisted on bringing us together. At that time, Monsieur P— was already in a rather advanced stage of consumption; he had just lost his brother, in Petrograd, through the same disease. My sister was asked to play a little music, and she chose, at random, Mendelssohn's "Prelude." To my astonishment, I saw Monsieur P—, whom we had met only that night, go and sit down near the piano, very much affected, and follow my sister's playing with a sort of anxiety. When she had finished he told her she had just reawakened in him thoughts of his brother, who played that selection

²⁶ Myers, *Human Personality*, II, 49.

in precisely the same way. After that time, whenever he saw my sister, he loved particularly to talk to her. We spoke of death, a frequent thing at Talta, always peopled by invalids. "Do you know," he said to my sister, "it always seems to me that my spirit is very near yours; I am certain that I've already known you; we know it was not in this world, so it was in a former life." One March evening he said to her, "If I die before you, which is most probable, I shall come back to you, but I shall appear in such a way as not to frighten you." My sister, taking the thing very seriously, answered that she would do the same if she died first, and I was a witness to this mutual promise.

We met now and again at the homes of friends, and we often saw him walking on the quay, in a nut-brown overcoat which excited our hilarity, and which remained in our memories, I hardly know why.

In the month of May we left Talta.

The following year, at Petrograd, on March 11, 1890, we went to the theater; "The Merchant of Venice" was being given. One of our friends was with us; she had come from Tsarskoe on this occasion. When the play ended we had just time to go back home and change our clothes, after which we took her to the station. She was leaving by the one-o'clock train. We put her in her car, and did not leave her until after the signal-bell for departure had rung for the second time.

Our servant had gone on ahead, to find our carriage. My sister took her seat in it first; as for me, I kept waiting, having descended the stairs more slowly; the servant held the door of the landau open. I was half-way up on the step, when suddenly I halted in this posture, so surprised that I no longer understood what was happening to me! It was dark in the carriage, and yet, opposite my sister, looking at her, I saw in a dim gray light, — one would have said it was artificial, — growing brighter toward the point that attracted my eyes most, *a vague silhouette of a translucent face*. This vision lasted but an instant, during which time, however, my eyes took in the least details of the visage. It seemed to me that I knew it, — *rather sharp features, hair parted a little to one side, a large nose, a very thin chin with a sparse beard of a chest yellow*. What strikes me, as I think of it now, is that I distinguished the different colors, although the grayish glimmer, which lighted up the unknown man but dimly, would not have sufficed, normally, to make them discernible. He was hatless, and, too, was dressed in an overcoat of a rather light nut-brown color. His whole person bore the stamp of great exhaustion and emaciation.

The servant, greatly astonished to see me thus brought to a halt on the step instead of climbing in, believed I had stepped on my skirt, and helped me to sit down. I asked my sister, taking my place beside her, if it were really our carriage.

I had so lost my head, since I had felt a real mental stupor in seeing this stranger opposite her, that I had not taken into account this fact: in the case of the real presence in front of her of such a person, neither my sister nor the footman would have remained so calm at the sight of him. When I was seated I saw nothing more, and asked my sister, "Didn't you see anything before you?" — "Nothing at all. And what could you have been thinking when you asked me, getting into the carriage, if it were really ours?" she answered, laughing. Then I told her all the foregoing, describing my vision minutely. "It seems to me we know that face," she said; "that part on one side, that nut-colored overcoat; but where did we see this person?"

Some days later, on a social call, we were suddenly told that Monsieur P— had just died at Talta. My sister and I looked at each other. At the mention of this name the sharp face and the nut-brown overcoat found their possessor. My sister realized this at the same time I did, thanks to my precise description. We looked in the newspapers for the exact date of his death. The demise was given as having taken place on March 14th, two days after the vision that I had had. I wrote to Talta for information. They told me that he had kept to his bed since November 24th, and that he had since been in a state of extreme weakness, but that sleep had not deserted him; he slept so long and so deeply, even during the last nights of his life, that this raised hopes of amelioration. We were astonished that it was I who had seen Monsieur P—, despite his promise to show himself to *my sister*. But I must here add that before the occurrence described above I had been a seer a certain number of times. This particular vision is the one which struck me most, with its minute details, and with the various colors of the face and even of the clothing.

Countess Ina Kapnist

Countess Eugenie Kapnist

The second signature is that of the sister who was present. Monsieur Michel Potrovo-Solovovo, who sent me this account, adds that he vouches for the fact that this vision of Countess Kapnist was related to him before he had learned of the death of the subject.

We have here an apparition of a dead man *before* he breathed his last, and even a rather long time before; but in his state of sleep, of coma, the fatal outcome was certain. It was a phantasm of the living, however, like the apparition of the Duke of Abrantès.

We are now presenting observed facts, without trying to explain them. We must first know that they exist. That these are hallucinations, optical delusions, as people have until now been content to assume, is no longer an admissible hypothesis for our scientific, critical examination, which needs must reconcile examples of coincidence, not ignore them. No questioning mind can be satisfied that the Duchess of Abrantès saw with such intensity from her bedroom, on the banks of Lake Geneva, her husband, who was committing suicide at Montbard, and saw this by

pure chance. And the Russian, who had promised a lady to appear to her in case of his death, showing himself in a carriage, after an evening in the theater, to carry out his promise — how can we assume that this, too, is a groundless hallucination? Now, it is not one, two, or three facts of this nature that I have before me, for this investigation; it is *several hundred*.

Let us say at once that, in our opinion, a phantasm of the dying Russian did not seat itself in the carriage. The question of clothing, with these apparitions, has always, I repeat, puzzled me greatly. The fluidic body, the astral body, the Peri, are inconsistent with these clothes. We must suppose that the soul of a person appearing acts by telepathy on the soul of the person who sees, that it is a subjective vision which seems objective, and that these phantoms are not material, capable of being photographed. There are other varieties of them. We shall return to this subject.

These phenomena occur much more frequently than one thinks. My own personal investigations have brought hundreds beneath my eyes, and *in general people hide them!* Most of them are so circumstantial in their details that the revelatory vision is quite adequate to portray the event.

Because a person has not, himself, experienced these phenomena, he has no right to deny them, or even to doubt them. If some one told me he did not believe in meteorites because he had never seen one, that he did not admit the existence of comets because he had never observed one, that earth quakes do not exist because he had never felt one, I should in my turn doubt his intelligence.

A famous traveler, on his return from Senegal, told me that he had never had a man make fun of him with more assurance than a black man to whom he had had the audacity to affirm that in France water was sometimes as hard as a stone. Water as hard as a rock! It is, indeed, something to guffaw at, for a black man who has never left the lakes of tropical regions.

Let us not be so — negative. For our general enlightenment we must, on principle, deny nothing, but must investigate, discuss.

Let us, then, examine the facts, with the sole object of self-enlightenment, without any preconceived ideas.

The technical observations that we shall give will, perhaps, throw a little light.

The following account of the apparition of a person about to die was sent to the London Psychical Society by an eminent English scientist, Dr. C. J. Romanes (“Proceedings,” Volume XI, page 440):

Toward the end of March, 1878, in the middle of the night and at a time when I considered myself awake, I thought I saw the door near the head of my bed open, and a white form come in, which grazed the head of the bed as it passed, came to a halt at its foot, and stood before me; this allowed me to see that its head and body were enveloped in white veils. Suddenly, lifting its hand, the form withdrew the veils which hid its face, and I was able to distinguish the features of my sister, who had been ill for some time in that very house. I called to her, crying out her name, and I saw her vanish instantly.

The following day, a little disturbed by this occurrence, I called Dr. Jenner into consultation, whose diagnosis was that my sister had only a few days to live. And, indeed, so it was.

I enjoyed perfect health, and was not a prey to anxiety of any kind. My sister was in the care of our regular physician, who had suspected nothing serious in the illness, so that I had not been disturbed, or my sister either. Apart from these singular observations, I have never had a vision of any sort.

C. J. Romanes

What hypothesis must we put forward as an explanation? The commonplace one of a hallucination does not explain this premonition, and must be eliminated. We may suppose that the *subconscious mind* of the invalid had a perception of imminent death, as opposed to the conscious personality which did not suspect it. We may think, with Bozzano, that this perception, awakening in her tender feelings for the brother she was about to leave, produced in the brother’s mind an impression capable of bringing about the observed effect. We may also think that Romanes’s sister underwent a real duplication and was borne as a fluid body to her brother.

The following observations, taken from the same volume of “Proceedings,” greatly resemble the foregoing. They were sent to Gurney by the observer herself, Madame Sophie Chapronière, who writes:

I was in my bedroom and was undressing with the help of my chamber-maid, Madame Gregory, who had been in my service for forty-one years. As she was taking a bracelet off I saw suddenly, appearing behind her and about two feet away, a form which resembled her absolutely. At that time she enjoyed perfect health. I said to her, “Why, Madame Gregory, I see your double this very moment!” She answered me, smiling, “Really, Madame!” and seemed in no way impressed. The following

Sunday she announced that she felt very tired and ailing. I sent for my doctor, who diagnosed the case as a slight indisposition. Despite this favorable diagnosis, she died suddenly on the following Wednesday. Her death took place at almost the same time as that of the appearance of her double to me, a week before.²⁷

S. Chaproniere

After reading the foregoing chapters we are prepared to listen to accounts of this sort.

All these facts are most disturbing, most puzzling, and impossible to explain. There is virtually only one way of escape; it is to deny them utterly, to attribute them all to errors, or even, if it seems necessary, to lies, to fantastic imaginings.

If a single one of my readers thought in this way, I should, in my turn, doubt his sincerity or his good sense.

The apparitions of phantasms do not always announce death, as the preceding chapters have shown. But these just given must here be put under the heading of manifestations of the dying.

I, for my part, have received so great a number of statements that it is impossible for me to publish even half or a quarter of them. We are much puzzled as to which to choose. The following communication can enlighten us especially. It is one of the first which I received.

March, 1899.

I believe I should bring to your knowledge three telepathic occurrences as to the authenticity of which I can testify.

First Occurrence: A lady, now dead, who was my first cousin, born and brought up in Paris, had married a physician of La Corrèze, a department, in which, consequently, she had gone to live.

She had left her parents, whom she loved dearly, with much sorrow. At the time of which I speak there was no communication with this region by railway or by telegraph. One night my cousin, sleeping beside her husband, was awakened by a glow lighting up the room, and by this light she saw, at the foot of her bed, the face of her father, smiling at her sweetly and sadly.

When she awakened her husband, all had vanished. Her father, my uncle, died the next day after this apparition, or the day after the next. (Let us remember, in this experience, the glow lighting the room.)

Second Occurrence: In Chabris, a little village near ours in the Department of L'Indre, there lived, about thirty-five years ago, a notary, Monsieur S—, who was closely related to another native of this town, Monsieur Camille B—. The latter had several brothers, one of whom, Eugene B—, who lived in Thésée, twenty kilometers from Chabris, was also a friend of the notary; he came to Chabris rather often.

One day Monsieur S—, walking in his garden, saw Monsieur Eugene B— coming toward him from the end of a pathway; he approached without saying anything, then went away, and disappeared. Very much astonished, Monsieur S— went to the home of his friend Camille, thinking he would find his brother Eugene there. Now, at the very time when the notary had seen his friend Eugene B— in his garden, the latter, who had gone to the Mont-Richard market, fifteen kilometers from Thésée, was dying in this town from an attack of apoplexy.

Third Occurrence: On April 7, 1888, there died, in our little town, Monsieur Henri T—, several years older than my wife, whom I have had the misfortune to lose since then. This Monsieur T— and she had been brought up together like brother and sister; but certain occurrences had destroyed their former relations, and for a long time they had remained total strangers to each other. This is what happened on the day of his death:

In the evening the weather was very fine; we went for a walk, leaving a lighted lamp upon the drawing-room table. The drawing-room is on the ground floor, and its windows give upon the garden; between the lamp and the windows were two arm-chairs. When we came back from our walk it was night; that is to say, it may have been any time between eight o'clock and half-past eight. We walked a few steps, before going in, along the pathway which runs beside the house, and my wife, looking in at the window, said to me: "Why, some one has come, in our absence, and Josephine [the maid] has let him in; there is a gentleman in the arm-chair, waiting for you." I hastened to enter. I opened the doors which lead from the hallway into the drawing-room. No one! My wife, most surprised, said to me: "I assure you, there was some one in the arm-chair; I did not see his face, since his back was to the window, but I saw, and saw clearly, a rather stout gentleman in an overcoat." Then, after reflecting, she added, "Why, one would have said it was Henri T—." And though she believed neither in spirits nor apparitions, she retained an impression that it was he whom she had seen again.

Thus, in the case of the first occurrence, there was an apparition before death.

²⁷ *Annales des Sciences psychiques* (1911), p. 145.

In the second at the moment of death.

In the third, about twelve hours afterward.

L. Lottin,

Justice of the Peace in Sells-sur-Cher, Loir-et-Cher.

(Letter 32)

I have given this narration here for the sake of the first of these three cases, especially, which belong in this chapter. I shall also put before the eyes of my attentive readers the following statement, because of the first case described.

These observations were sent me in 1899. The first tells of an apparition fifteen or twenty hours before death, the second a year after.

One morning, toward seven o'clock, I heard our maid go into my parents' room; I was thoroughly awake. About ten minutes afterward the door of my room opened, and I recognized my father distinctly. Frightened to see him at such an early hour, thinking that he had come to tell me that my mother was worse, I raised myself half up, and gazed at him; I wished to ask him what had happened, but hardly had I said, "What is it?" when I saw his legs, his trunk, and then his head disappear in succession. A moment afterward our maid entered in her turn. Still completely upset, I asked her if some one were ill: she reassured me absolutely. The day passed without incident; I was no longer thinking anything of the matter when, that evening, my father had a stroke of apoplexy, and *died in the night*.

Eleven years after this sad event the first anniversary of my mother's death was approaching; on this occasion I had just made some calls to invite people to the religious ceremonies at the end of the year; I not only was tired, but I had taken cold, and should have gone to bed; I feared greatly that I should not be able to go to the church. When the day came, and I was thoroughly awake, I heard a creaking of the boards in the direction of my mother's room: I recognized her step, which drew nearer little by little. She was close to me; I did not see her, but I heard her, very distinctly, call me by the pet name that she had given me as a child, and in a voice so sweet, so plaintive, that it seemed to me to express the regret she felt at my condition, and at the trouble I had taken for her. At the sound of her voice I felt an incomprehensible excitement; I was as though electrified; I had the strength to get up, and I was able to be present at the prayers and even to go to the cemetery.

E. M.

(Letter 46)

Let us select the first of these two experiences for this chapter on apparitions of the living, here investigated. We shall discuss in Volume III manifestations of the dead.

Here is another apparition of the dying, some time before death.

I find among my documents (Letter 806, of October 20, 1899) a letter from my very good friend Madame Victor Dobelmann of Strasburg, a member of the Astronomical Society of France since the year 1899, relating a curious story given as a bizarre and uncomprehended case by the narrator who, according to what she has told me since, was not at all abreast of the times as to these phenomena, though she had practised table-turning since 1853, with my friend Jean Mace, in Beblenheim. We are concerned with the wafting, the day before her death, of the spirit of a young girl into the church where her fiancé, a pastor, was preaching: she saw him and heard him, and was seen by him, a story analogous to that of the young mother, dying, of which we shall soon speak, who went from Egypt to England to see her children. Here is Madame Dobelmann's story:

My friend Madame Turban was taking care of a younger sister who was ill. The home of their father, Monsieur Heits, a printer, was in a corner of the Place du Temple-Neuf; the younger sister announced all the people of their acquaintance who came out of the street at the opposite corner, although she could not see them from her bed. Soon they lost hope of saving her. One Sunday afternoon she expressed to her sister her great regret at never having heard her fiancé, the pastor several leagues from there, preach. She fell into catalepsy, and lay for two hours as one dead. When she awakened she told of having seen her fiancé, and of having heard him preach in such and such a way. She died the next day. After the burial Madame Turban asked the fiancé if on Sunday afternoon he had preached on such and such a subject. Struck by her question, and very much surprised, he asked, "How do you know that?" — "Your fiancée told me." — "It's very strange," he answered. "Just imagine — in the middle of my sermon I thought I saw a white form enter the church, which resembled my fiancée; she sat down in an empty seat in the midst of the assembly, and disappeared toward the end of the service."²⁸

(Letter 806)

²⁸ An identical occurrence may be read of among Stead's observations in England.

One person appeared to another at the moment of losing consciousness, some hours before death. This account was translated from the “Journal of the Society for Psychical Research” and published in the “*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*,” 1891, page 59:

In the spring and summer of 1886 I often went to visit a poor woman named Ewans, who lived in our parish (Caynham). She was very ill, suffered from a painful disease, but was given, she told me, great pleasure when I went to see her. I often went to talk with her. Toward the middle of October her condition had grown worse, but she seemed to be in no immediate danger.

I had not seen her for several days, when one evening, when I was in the dining-room with the rest of my family, I saw a woman’s form, dressed like Mrs. Ewans, and wearing a large apron and a muslin cap. This form crossed the room, from one door to the other, and vanished.

I cried, “What’s that?” — “Why, what’s the matter?” my mother asked. I answered, “That woman who just passed.” Every one began to laugh at me, and to ask me if I were dreaming; but I was fully persuaded that it was Madame Ewans, and *the following day we learned that she was dead.*

Bertha Hurly

Miss Hurly’s mother confirmed this story with a letter which it would be superfluous to give here, and which ends thus:

When we went to her home to inquire about her death, we learned that she had fallen into delirium and lost consciousness at the moment of her appearance to Bertha, and that she had died toward morning.

February 25, 1890.

Annie Ross

Thus the phantom, the simulacrum, the phantasm of the dying woman, was seen several hours before death, when she had already lost consciousness, a case analogous to those we already know. From our comparative research we may think that this was not a case of the transmission of a phantasm, but Mrs. Ewans acting upon Miss Hurly’s mind. The garments (the apron, the muslin cap) indicate this subjective character.

The following apparition is of the same sort.

About eight days before the death of his uncle, a native of the Department du Nord, known to Monsieur A. Erny²⁹, was awakened, in the night, by a hand touching his hair. Sitting up in bed, he saw before him his uncle; he was astonished by this apparition and by the fact that his uncle’s face was *unshaven*, which was not his habit. He spoke to him without receiving any reply, though the visitant had begun to pace up and down the room. Getting up to assure himself that he was not the victim of an illusion, he could discover no one.

Eight days afterward he learned of the death of his uncle, who, since he had been ill for some time, had not had himself shaved, as was his daily custom.

But why put before the eyes of the reader all the facts I have before me? We have so many varied investigations to bring to a focus here, for our new enlightenment. This volume must not be filled too full. Those omitted will not be lost, for we are beginning a whole collection of books on the psychic. Yet I should not like to end this chapter with out the following lines:

Theosophists have given the name of “astral visits” to the apparitions which precede death. Leadbeater has told of a most remarkable one, taken from “Glimpses of the Supernatural” by Dr. F. G. Lee (Volume II, page 64),³⁰ which it is interesting to consider here. Here are the facts:

From Egypt to England — A husband and wife (the husband holding a rather high position in India) were returning to England after an absence of four years, there to rejoin the children left in the mother country, when the young wife fell ill in Egypt. The ill woman manifested the most alarming symptoms, and her weakness was soon such that all hope of saving her had to be abandoned. Her only preoccupation was an immense longing to see her children again, a longing she did not cease to voice to those nursing her. Day after day, for more than a week, her aspirations and her prayers had only this one object: she would die happy, she said again and again, if this longing could be satisfied.

The morning of the day on which the ship had once more gone on its way toward Europe, the young woman fell into a profound sleep. During these long hours of sleep she lay perfectly calm and tranquil. A short time after twelve, however, she awakened suddenly, crying: “I saw them all the same. I saw them! God be praised!” She slept again until evening; then she

²⁹ See “*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*,” 1898, p. 81.

³⁰ See “*L’autre côté de la Mort*” (Paris, 1910), p. 178.

breathed her last.

The children of this dying woman were being educated in Torquay, in charge of a friend of the family. On that day they were playing, each amusing himself in his own way with books and playthings, watched over by a nursemaid who had never seen their parents. Suddenly the mother, just as she had done in former days, came into the room, stopped, looked smilingly at each of the children for some moments, passed into the next room, then disappeared. The three oldest recognized her at once, and were greatly disturbed by this silent apparition. The youngest child and the nursemaid saw a woman clothed in white go into the smallest room and immediately disappear.

The date of this manifestation (September 10, 1854) was carefully noted, and it was established later that the two occurrences coincided exactly. The story of this occurrence was written upon one of the leaves of the family Bible, on which were devoutly entered life's principal happenings.

In this case, too, then, the apparition of the dying woman took place before her death. I do not propose to admit that a phantasm was borne, clothed, from Egypt to England; it seems to me that the mind of this young mother acted at a distance upon her children and upon any who were near them; that she really saw her children and that they themselves saw her, through an impression which they experienced making her image manifest. In this, as in the preceding cases, we must either deny or accept the facts given. And, once again, the proofs are too numerous and too consistent for people to be able lightly to deny them, as they have generally been content to do.

Numerous, indeed; but one must know when to stop. The reader desirous of enlightenment has been informed. I have wished to lay before him some few of the most significant cases. These facts are of all dates, and we might in our investigation behold many more follow in succession. But our rich, immense panorama of observations forbids it.

It is with regret that I leave unknown many significant observations. At the very moment of correcting the proofs of these pages (January 8, 1921) I received still another, so odd that I cannot help adding it. Here it is:

Stockholm, Herserud Wrangelsberg,

January 3, 1921.

It was in 1869. My brother, aged ten, my cousin, nine, and I, seven, all three recovering from scarlet fever, were in bed in my mother's room. The house was sixty kilometers from Odessa, where my father was, ill of dropsy.

One morning my brother and my cousin asked my mother, at the same instant, why my father, who had come in the night, had not awakened her, and why he was no longer there. My mother, astonished, told them that he was in Odessa, ill, and that he had not returned.

"What!" my brother and my cousin answered together. "He came back, *because we saw him.*"

And they told how, though they were not asleep, they had most clearly seen my father come into the room; how he had drawn near my brother, who had wished to speak, but had been unable to utter a sound. Next, he went up to my cousin, who, seeing him, was frightened and hid his face under the covers; then he went toward the little bed in which I slept, not far from my mother; he gazed at us, then went toward the door opening into another room, and disappeared.

Such is the two little boys' exact account.

Four or five days afterward my father died.

Since that time, and during his whole life, my cousin, who died only a year ago, was afraid of the dark: it was like a malady.

I can guarantee the authenticity of these facts, all the details of which I remember. As for the explanation, it is for you, dear Master, to discover it.

Count Auguste de Malachowski.

(Letter 4362)

This experience fits in, of itself, with all the preceding ones of apparitions before death.

The information as to phantasms yielded us by this chapter is in accordance with that in Chapter II: during life the soul may detach itself from the body.

We have just ascertained the truth as to apparitions of the living coming before death and announcing it, and apparitions of the dying some time before the last hour. Besides these *apparitions*, various *manifestations* are observed, not less interesting, nor less instructive. It was necessary to set them apart for clearness in our investigations. We shall devote the next chapter to them.



MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DYING SOME TIME BEFORE DEATH (OTHER THAN APPARITIONS)

*We must examine all without preconceived convictions
and by the most exacting method.*
Francis Bacon

We have just had, before our eyes, examples of apparitions of the dying before death. Apart from apparitions in the strict sense, there are various manifestations of the same sort. We are here entering upon a really extraordinary world, so strange — let us acknowledge it — that one understands the constant denials of which these phenomena have been the object.

Manifestations of the dying, other than apparitions, are as varied as they are numerous. The subject is of unsuspected amplitude, and so vast that, in order to see our way clearly, we must resort to judicious classification. It is a world in itself, as we were saying, the one world, which we must investigate and which, in consequence, must cease to be occult. Light! Light on all things!

The progress of the new branches of learning and their propagation, in the cause of general education encounters unforeseen obstacles every instant and that on every rung of the social ladder. Besides eminent minds, there are those of the lower orders who do not reason, and who are hostile without realizing it. These simple, rudimentary minds fear everything. They do not like to be shaken out of their mediocrity.

Plainly, in that which concerns psychic research, all are not prepared to accept freely the result of these investigations as to the understanding of the soul and its destiny. The number of cowards, of tremulous, fettered men, is greater than one would think. It will be remembered that in 1899 I was continuing the research which I had long since undertaken through various publications. I had chosen, together with its estimable and erudite editor, Adolphe Brisson, the weekly review of the *“Annales Politiques et Littéraires”* for an inquiry among its readers, as serious-minded as they are numerous, and, it will be recalled, they responded in large numbers. At the height of success a certain number of them complained of this free investigation, in the name of their religious beliefs, stopped their subscriptions, and, in consequence, led the editor of this review to end the investigation. I received great number (more than a hundred) expressions of regret and demands that I seek to persuade my good friend Brisson to revoke his decision. This I did not do; I sent him none of the protests, for I should not have wished his personal feelings to interfere in anything that might risk harming his periodical in the slightest. Friendship must be, above all, impersonal and devoted. One of these letters has just come under my eyes. It is Letter 633 of my investigations (dated April 27, 1899); the writer, after having told me of a most important telepathic observation, added:

Since I have the pleasure of writing to you, allow me, dear Master, to protest vehemently against the resolution you have taken to stop the publication of the interesting articles appearing in the “Annales.” You, do not wish, you say, to give annoyance to even a small number of subscribers. But you will give annoyance to a much greater number by not continuing to seek, with them, the solution of these intensely interesting problems. Naturally, each subscriber finds in the “Revue” articles which displease him. What would become of the editors if all the subjects which do not win the approbation of all readers had to be eliminated?

Why, it is in the very periodical in which Monsieur Sarcey has so long been preaching tolerance to us that an intolerant group of the meanest sort is allowed to deprive the vast majority of subscribers of a great pleasure!

These psychic investigations dealing with the search for the Unknown will be published in book form, you say? All very well, but apart from the price of this book, which will not, doubtless, bring it within reach of all purses, various other reasons — which I shall not bore you by enlarging upon — will keep many of us from making the purchase. But Heaven knows how interesting these problems are, and what a pleasure it is to study them under your guidance.

If the distressing decision that you have made could be revoked I should, Monsieur, be immensely pleased, and with me thousands of readers of the “Annales.”

Pardon this long letter. I do not suppose that the smallest portion of it will be made public; but should it please you to publish the least part of it, I should be obliged if you would be so good as to omit my name.

(Letter 633)

So it goes! Even this objector judged it prudent to ask me to omit the name, which is there beneath my eyes.

Such is humanity!

And we desire progress in general enlightenment!

Most fortunately for our investigations, people continued to impart to me observations concerning these agitating phenomena. Having carefully reread the manuscript of this book before sending it to be printed, the time I spent in this way brought me new documents. I am writing these lines on November 30, 1920, and the last letter I received (yesterday) bears the number 4332. My readers are my best-informed collaborators.

The existence of the spirit independent of the body, and its ability to function at a distance, can no longer be the subject of any doubt for the readers of the foregoing pages, after all the explicit observations which people have done me the honor of sending, and for which I thank my correspondents, who have wished to join, in this way, in the search for truth, uncomprehended up to the present, outside the compass of the authoritative sciences.

I said above that apart from apparitions of the dying, before death, there are varied manifestations of the same sort. That which follows is really astounding:

Your research concerning this absorbing question has filled me with the most intense interest. Being struck, above all, by the number of facts related by you, I conceived the whim of making inquiries on my own account, as to the existence of like phenomena. You may imagine my surprise when the first person to whom I addressed myself, one of my most esteemed relatives, could tell me of two cases of telepathy such as those you relate. She guaranteed their authenticity, and there is no reason to doubt her good faith; so I am sending them to you, hoping they may help to light up the domain of the new science, still so obscure and so mysterious.

The matter concerns my own great-grandfather. That this occurrence happened long ago does not diminish its authenticity in the least.

My ancestor was an organ-builder and had, as such, worked at his craft in different regions of Alsace, when he undertook to install an organ in the Protestant village of Ernolsheim (on the Lower Rhine): this was to be his last work. Before the instrument was quite completed (all that remained was the tuning) he fell desperately ill, and was borne, dying, to his native land. His death was expected from one moment to another. Silent and sad, relatives and friends surrounded the dying man's bed. Suddenly the latter, who for some time had given no sign of life, sat up and said in a clear, calm voice, "Nothing is the matter; everything is all right." After this, he fell back on the pillows and breathed his last.

No one, it goes without saying, understood the meaning of these last words of the dying man; but light was soon shed on them. Two days later the relatives of the deceased received a letter from the pastor of the parish in which the organ remained uncompleted, telling them of an extraordinary phenomenon which had taken place in his church on the preceding night. Sounds had been heard, suddenly, from the new organ, which had not, so far, been played; he and the schoolmaster had been awakened and had run to the church; but they found no one there, despite a lengthy search; the keyboard was locked, even; it was inexplicable. What they had been able to hear distinctly was that the organ was being played wonderfully, though it was not tuned. The pastor then had an idea that there might be some connection between the organ-builder and this phenomenon, and it was under this impression that he had written.

This letter opened the eyes of those who had been present at the death of my great and made them grasp the meaning of the dying man's mysterious words.

Indeed, if such were the occurrence, we could not deny that we had in this case a most astonishing example of a manifestation on the part of a dying man, — the uneasy spirit of the artist detaching itself from his body before death, traversing space, and going to convince itself of the perfection of the work left uncompleted! What an unfathomable mystery lies in an act of this sort!

Ch. Hoppmann

Student of philosophy

Finkmatt Strasse, Strasburg.

(Letter 977)

I admit that this story is most incredible, most fantastic. It seemed to me inadmissible, —above all, on account of the organ-bellows. But the information I gained shows that it was accepted by the builder's family, which devoutly preserved it in memory. There may have been some exaggeration in the impression that "the organ

was being played wonderfully"; still, this story was not founded upon nothing. Besides, the documents gathered in our researches prove the existence of a *psychic force* which may separate itself from the body and function at a distance.

The phenomenon took place *before* death: a case of the transmission of energy.

It may always be maintained that these things are not true, that the accounts were fabricated, were illusory, false, etc. Yes, one may always deny. As for us, now familiar with these facts in considerable numbers, we have compared them, we have proved that they bear one another out, and we affirm that the will of Man is not confined within the limits of his body.

The will is not a subjective, inner sensation. It is an objective, external agency.

Here is another example of the same sort, equally objective. I am taking it from one of the letters I received in 1918. It is a manifestation of a dying man forty-eight hours before death, in a comatose condition.

It was eight years ago, at the beginning of my married life, and already I bore in myself the hope of my future maternity; we were living in this same apartment which we occupy to-day: 5 rue Nobel, Paris.

One night, it may have been at three or four o'clock, I was awakened abruptly by the noise of the dining-room window opening with violence.

"Why," I thought, "what a windy night!" I got up, and went to close the window, supposing that I had neglected to turn the handle completely; this, however, is not probable.

I was calmly going back to my bed, when suddenly my attention was attracted, in the darkness in which I then found myself, by a luminous spot visible on the wall of a corner of the room. (*I was obliged to pass* near this place in order to return to my room.) This spot looked like a disk, distorted in places, and shed a very soft light, difficult to describe, at once vaguely like moonlight and phosphorescence. I went up and, mechanically, put my hand on the glow, seeking to explain to myself whence it came.

I went toward the window. There was no moonlight; all was dark; everything slumbered in the nearby houses; no light came from without.

So it was not a reflection. At that moment I grew afraid, but it was a stupid, irrational fear, which made me scream and call my husband.

He awakened, switched on the electric light in our room, went toward the dining-room, and could discover nothing.

I then attributed this excessive nervousness to my physical condition; I went back to bed and fell asleep, reassured.

The next day I was awakened about seven o'clock in the morning by a *very loud cracking* that seemed to come from the dining-room table (which I can see from my bed). It appeared to me that fearful pressure was being exerted upon this piece of furniture; the noise lasted long enough to enable me to awaken thoroughly, and also to awaken my husband, who heard the end of the racket. We owned a kitten; this creature, being near the piece of furniture at that time, showed a strange uneasiness; it took a defensive attitude, its back arched, its hair on end, its gaze seemingly fixed upon something which it alone could see. We ascertained, afterward, that *the table had split completely along its whole length*.

At that time my husband's father, who lived in Marseilles, was seriously ill with contagious grip. For the previous eight days we had been kept informed as to his illness. Seized by a sad presentiment, after these strange occurrences, we expected to hear during the day of the death of this worthy man; such was not the case; we learned that at that very hour he had sunk into a comatose condition, and died forty-eight hours afterward.

So, did the flesh still throb, when the essential part of this being was far away?

During these last two days he spoke very rarely.

Thursday morning, the day of his death, he seemed for a short time to regain consciousness; it was to ask his wife what time it was.

"Nine o'clock," she answered.

"So my time has not come yet'?" he said, as if impatient.

These were his last words.

At exactly one o'clock he died.

I shall leave to the great savant that you are the task of inquiring into these facts; as for me, in my ignorance and my weakness, I can only state them.

Madame P. Gayraud

(Letter 4001)

We are all ignorant, Madame, and I the most so. There was in this case a real physical phenomenon, objective, like that of the organ-builder, — the split table, a window opening, a frightened cat. Doubtless, one may blame the wind, the temperature, the molecular activity of the wood, etc., but this is hypothetical enough. And this death of a man who knew he was going to die? Must we deny these statements because they seem inexplicable to us? It would be simpler, of course.

These manifestations of the dying, before death, are not very rare, although less frequent than those which coincide with death. From the thousands of replies to my general inquiry, a computation of some value might be made.

Let us note the “luminous spot” observed. We shall find it again in other accounts. Our investigation is growing in scope.

The phenomena that we are studying here are all akin in that they reveal to us the existence of mysterious faculties of the human soul; but they differ strangely from one another. In what category should the following letter be put, which was sent to me on January 13, 1913? It belongs, in any case, to this series, and, moreover, tells of material, physical, mechanical action, like the preceding letters. It has been transcribed literally.

My Dear Master:

I have just reread your works “*Les Forces Naturelles Inconnues*” and I do not believe that any mind, however lacking in seriousness and power of reflection, could, in future, doubt the reality of these curious phenomena. My convictions are all the more profound in this respect from the fact that once in my life I personally experienced the influence of unknown forces. Though this manifestation did not have the importance of certain of the facts related in your works, I was struck, nevertheless, by its strange nature, completely foreign to the normal sensations of life. I am sending it to you, that it may be added to the numerous documents which you possess.

Here are the facts, told simply and without the least exaggeration, I assure you. Is not sincerity, moreover, its only source of interest?

At the beginning of 1907 my father — then aged eighty-four years — was still a man vigorous and alert for his great age. He enjoyed perfect health, and it happened very often that he walked his eighteen kilometers in the afternoon; this is what he called “taking his little turn after lunch.”

On a certain March day — it must have been between the fifteenth and the twentieth, but the exact date is of no great importance — my father, my wife, and I were gathered together at the table for breakfast. Conversation, after having run its usual course, had halted for an instant. My eyes were fixed upon the things before me, when, lifting my head abruptly, I gazed at my father with a feeling of the most intense stupefaction! It seemed to me that, dead for ten years, perhaps, he had again taken his place among us. That lasted only an instant, but the impression I experienced was extremely intense.

Some days afterward my father took to his bed suddenly and died, on April 24th, after twenty-six days of illness.

I shall hold all my life to the conviction that I received, from this occurrence, the warning of an event that nothing else made us foresee.

Always your fervent, your devoted disciple,

A. Chèvremont,
Croix-de-Vie, Vendée.

(Letter 2313)

This strange vision, on the part of a man whose integrity and scientific poise of mind I myself know, is as indubitable as it is inexplicable. It proves to us, above all, that our psychic being is gifted with supernormal faculties, and that there is a whole order of uncomprehended things to be explored.

We shall speak farther on of warnings at the moment of death. We are concerned, in the case just given, with a premonitory vision preceding the day of death by about a month, without any normal indication of what was preordained.

Let us continue our comparative research.

The following curious letter as to the extraordinary phenomena preceding death was sent me from Buenos

Aires:

I cannot resist the impulse, to take pen in hand in order to acquaint you with certain inexplicable occurrences which happened in my family, in which there are no superstitious, hysterical, or abnormal persons.

As for me, I am following a liberal profession, with numerous clientele; I am in the fullness of my physical and mental vigor, and I have never thought of taking part in spiritualistic experiments. I am a convinced materialist, and I believe that what we call "spirit" is but matter, and that the refinements of thought are as material as the function of digestion. Our senses do not allow us to know the mystery which surrounds us; that is the only difference. Instruments by which we may fathom this mystery have not yet been invented.

Now, here are the facts:

We were living in a town in the north of Spain, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay. I was a very young child when my elder sister was taken desperately ill. In a nearby room, which was the dining-room, my mother and two of my other sisters were nursing the invalid. At such and such an hour my mother asked one of my sisters to go and lie down on her bed and the latter complied. Her room communicated with the dining-room, and was directly opposite the room in which the invalid was.

Some moments afterward my sister came back into the dining-room, saying that it was better that the other sister should lie down, for she did not wish to sleep. This was acted upon; but the sister who had left last came back, in her turn, and asked my mother to go, herself, and rest.

My mother reproached them for being timid, at their age (twenty and twenty-one), but, for fear of being scolded, they said nothing as to the real reason which had sent them from the bedroom.

My mother in her turn went in to rest, leaving the door half open as my sisters had done, for the room was illuminated only by the light from the dining-room, where the invalid was being cared for.

My mother's stay in the room was not long, either, for she came back into the dining-room, pale and greatly affected. It was then that I asked them all, "Why, what happened to you?" By their explanation it appeared that all three had experienced the same thing. Each of the three had lain down, and shortly afterward there had been motion and noise in the mattress; the bed began to move as though there were some restless animal in it. Each had leaped from the bed and looked under it, to discover the cause of this shaking; they had found nothing and had lain down again; as soon as they were in bed they had perceived once more, in the mattress, the strange noise which had so alarmed them.

So all three had refused to sleep on such an extraordinary bed. At the very moment when they were telling of their impressions, they heard a noise from the cupboard doors in the neighboring kitchen; they were banging as though shaken by a furious wind, or by Herculean arms. Nevertheless, all was quiet in the kitchen, there was no wind, and all the doors were tightly closed.

My eldest sister died on this same day, or a very short time afterward, and this strange phenomenon preceded her death.

I am giving you these facts without comment.

Unless we assume that all narrators of these incidents are mad, it seems to me that we are forced to accept them, despite their unlikelihood.

This was still another manifestation before death. The letter went on as follows:

Some years later my youngest sister (there were four of them, — the eldest, deceased, two others of whom I have spoken, and the youngest) fell ill, suddenly, of smallpox. She was put into the very room in which the eldest had died.

The two other sisters had married and lived in Argentina, in one of the cities of the interior; my brother, the eldest of the children in the family, lived in the capital, Buenos Aires.

One night this brother had lain down and was reading the newspapers, when suddenly he heard, at the head of the bed, a strange noise like that of a large clock which makes this particular sound of the escapement mechanism when striking the hours. The noise was so loud that his wife, who was half asleep, awakened with a start, and it was repeated at intervals for several minutes.

A moment afterward they heard a racket in the bathroom. My brother, believing the noise due to some open window, leaped from his bed to go and close it; but he found that everything was as it should be, and that the doors and windows were quite shut.

At that same time one of my sisters, who lived in a city of the interior, was seated on her bed, suckling her last born child, her husband was sleeping beside her.

Suddenly she noticed that the silhouette of her young sister who had remained in Spain had appeared on the wall, and she called her husband's attention to this extraordinary fact. She even maintains that the face was so clear and stood out so well

that when she had finished suckling the child she took a pencil and traced the silhouette as well as possible, to show it to our other sister; for they were living together, the two husbands being brothers, and even business associates.

There must be sonic exaggeration in all this. The most singular thing, in my opinion, is that the strange noises heard by my brother and my sister-in-law *corresponded with the demise* of my sister, who was dying of smallpox in Spain, even though all of them were on- aware that she was ill.

I was in Spain at this time. The night before the death of my little sister I had gone to bed, as had one of my brothers, in a house in which a butcher lived, who owned several dogs. During the whole night these dogs did not allow us to sleep, howling plaintively and ceaselessly, as though weeping. My sister died on the evening of the next day.

I gladly authorize you to make any use you wish of this letter, but I must insist on anonymity; with this in view, I am signing a pseudonym, and am slightly changing my handwriting. In view of my profession, I might encounter prejudice if people knew that I am interested in this sort of research. I have not the courage to struggle with the prejudices of an ignorant and superficial society, although, as I have told you, I am a convinced materialist.

In case you do me the honor of acknowledging the receipt of this letter, you have my name and my address at the head of this sheet.

With the greatest esteem, I remain your humble servant.

Sarcé Dazacal,
Buenos Aires.

That all these facts sent from all parts of the world have no cause, nor any meaning, are only illusions, hallucinations — it seems to me that none of my readers can suppose this. And what of the following manifestation of a dying person, also preceding death, which was told me by a most serious-minded man of whose well-balanced and thoughtful temperament I have had occasion to learn the value? It has been transcribed word for word, like the preceding one.

Lunéville, September 30, 1900.

Dear Master:

Having read your book "L'Inconnu," I believe it my duty to bring to your attention the following incident which happened in my family:

In 1857 (when I was three years old) my parents were already living in the house in which I am at present. This house is situated in the midst of a garden, and at about eighty meters' distance from all communication with the outer world. We were living on the ground floor, the first floor serving as a store-room, where straw mats and empty baskets were put (we are gardeners, from father to son). The bed was placed in an alcove situated in the east room, with a window to the south. This alcove was shut off by two large doors of soft pine.

One night both my parents heard distinctly a noise in the room above, like that which might have been caused by the falling over upon the floor of several piles of empty baskets. My mother was frightened by this, but my father reassured her, telling her that it must be cats which in fighting had brought about this collapse. (The next day it was ascertained that everything was in order, and that nothing had been disturbed.) Some moments afterward three very distinct blows resounded against the window of the room, which was about a meter from their heads; my father leaped quickly from the bed, opened the window which gives on to the garden, and cried: "Who is there? What do you want?" He got no response. After having explored the grounds near by, he went back to bed, believing that he had been made the butt of a silly practical joke on the part of a neighbor. Scarcely had he gone back to bed, with the windows and doors tightly closed, when three new blows were heard, this time against the very door of the alcove within the room. These blows resembled those that would have been made by a stout rod in a vigorous hand, striking against the door.

This time my father, finding the thing more and more inexplicable, had a presentiment, which he imparted to my mother, of a supernatural summons from my maternal grandmother, who was ill, but whom they had left that evening in no danger of any complications in her malady.

All sounds ceased, and at dawn they hastened to the invalid, about two kilometers from there. She told them that she had thought a great deal about them in the night, and had feared she would never see them again.

She died in the course of the day, and no sound has been heard since.

I guarantee the authenticity of these facts; my parents told them to me several times, as well as to intimate friends. They are incapable of lying.

A friend to whom my mother related what had happened to her told her that there was no reason to be too astonished by it; that when, one day, she herself was cleaning vegetables, seated in a chair, she was struck on the knees by a turnip which

was on the ground and had heard, at the same instant, two cries: "Mother! Mother!" *That same day her son, a soldier, was dying* in our colony of Guiana; she did not hear of his death until very much later.

This is the story which I wished to send you, to aid you, if possible, in the great and splendid task which you have undertaken.

Nicolas Cordier,
Gardener in Lunéville.

(Letter 945)

There are commonplace things here which astonish us and which seem to us unworthy of the solemn subject which we are studying. The throwing of a turnip! It is idiotic, we think. Nevertheless there is one thought that may steady us, the *knowledge that we know nothing*. Our duty is to examine everything.

The manifestation by a dying person just related took place, as did the preceding one, before death, probably in a state of sleep or of catalepsy.

The authenticity of this account cannot be doubted. I have since made the acquaintance of this gardener, who was then president of the Lunéville Democratic Club. He spread enlightenment by means of a library of popular works, and was enrolled among the members of the Astronomical Society of France; his is a practical and liberal mind, anxious to be informed on all subjects; he is a great observer of the works of nature, and is of scrupulous honesty.

These manifestations of the dying, *before death*, are worthy of attention and lead us toward the solution of the great problem. I have received a certain number of observations of the same sort, and together we shall here examine them, without preconceived general ideas.

At the beginning of my investigation I received the following letter from Saint-Joseph, Martinique, and dated April 20, 1899:

I was living in the country and had a roommate. My friend and I, having gone to town, went to see an old maiden lady who loved us dearly, and who was about to die.

When we got back home we went to bed with the doors and windows closed. In the morning, about six o'clock, when we were still in bed, and daylight had entered the room, *I heard and I saw*, simultaneously, the door being violently shaken.

With an instinctive movement, my companion and I found ourselves sitting up, our eyes fixed on this door which, a second time, was energetically shaken.

"Mademoiselle Thérèse is dead," I said. "Let's dress and go down."

When we got to town we found our friend at the point of death; she did not die until two or three hours after the incident of the morning. I had no maid-servant sleeping in the house, or any domestic animal.

It is useless to add that the rooms were scrupulously gone over, and that every investigation made proved that this door could not have been moved by anyone at all.

For your research, always methodical, I have asked my friend to sign, with me, the story of these occurrences, as fresh in our memories as on the first day.

Hortense Codé
Cécile Legendre

I have received this sort of observations from all over the world, — manifestations by the dying, not at the moment of death, but preceding it by a shorter or longer time. Plainly, we understand nothing about them. In former days nothing was understood as to the phenomena of lightning; we shall ascertain, a little farther on, that the explanation of the facts about it and of its extraordinary feats is still far from being discovered. The existence of the phenomena of which we are telling here has been equally established by observation, though they have remained unexplained. When Cicero spoke of the magnet, he had no conception of terrestrial and solar magnetism.

In this same year, 1899, in the month of October, I received from Rome the following account of a most remarkable premonition, sent by the observer himself. This letter is given word for word:

The illustrious Flammarion³¹ must pardon the boldness of a stranger; but he must know that the occurrence which will prove to him once more the reality of telepathic transmission happened to me myself; the incident, however, was not closed until two months after the premonition.

In 1862 I was an engineer and lived in Alessandria, Piedmont, and my family — that is to say my father, my mother, my brother and three sisters — were living in Turin, our native city. As I dearly loved my family — who also loved me dearly — I went almost every Sunday to Turin to have dinner with them; the distance was only two hours by train (90 kilometers), and this Sunday reunion was always a celebration. On a certain Sunday in November, I had gone there as usual; I had found all my family in good health, particularly the youngest of my sisters, Louise, an adorable young girl of eighteen, whom I especially loved; I was her godfather and was fourteen years older than she. She had a very good disposition; she was a beautiful, slender brunette, and in splendid health. On that Sunday she cheered us during dinner with her good humor, her witty sallies, and after the meal with her sonatas on the piano, which she played rather as an artist than a mere dilettante. I thus had no reason for anxiety as to her health, and I went away with out worries of any sort.

The following Wednesday, about one o'clock in the afternoon, I was seated, after lunch, beside the hearth, on which a good fire burned. It was a misty day, with a fog one could have cut with a knife, a coldness that chilled you to the marrow. I had dozed off, and had slept for perhaps a quarter of an hour, when I heard, very distinctly, the voice of my sister Louise, calling to me in tearful tones, saying, "Felix, Felix, help me, help me!" I woke up with a start, completely upset, and in spite of my efforts to persuade myself that it was a nightmare, caused, perhaps, by indigestion, I remained very much disturbed. I was alone in my little bachelor apartment, with the doors and windows closed.

The next day I waited anxiously for the mail from Turin, which I received regularly in the middle of the week; but, contrary to their habit, neither my mother nor my sister had written me. A letter from my brother informed me, with much circumspection, that poor Louise had fallen ill, suddenly attacked by a severe fever, and that her condition had caused them extreme uneasiness.

I left at once for Turin, where I found my parents deeply distressed; the malady was growing worse, and our physician's diagnosis was a dangerous case of typhoid fever. My sister's robust constitution enabled her to struggle with the disease for eight weeks; but, in spite of all the care lavished on her, she succumbed on January 24, 1863.

Stricken by the same malady, and day by day overcome, above all, by grief, my father died two months afterward. He had never been ill before.

My mother, who also enjoyed very good health, gradually weakened and died in her turn, inconsolable.

It was thirty-seven years ago that I heard this cry of my poor sister, and I remember it as though it were yesterday. I have passed through many tribulations in my life, but no sorrow equaled that one.

Félix Fossati

(Letter 779)

This manifestation took place, as one sees, before death, and even two months before, but during the illness which was to carry off this robust young girl; and it evidently had some connection with her condition. What is most probable is that the appeal came from the sister to the brother, — a mental appeal, become verbal for the hearer. It was not the latter who was borne in a dream from Alessandria to Turin (though nothing is simpler in telæsthesia); it was, rather, psychic vibrations passing from Turin to Alessandria.

Those who deny from preconceived convictions will see here only illusions and chance coincidences. Why? Because they are ignorant. It does not seem to me that the lovers of truth who have read the three hundred and twenty-two pages of our first volume and the one hundred and forty-five pages which precede this, and who, in consequence, are familiar with supernormal faculties of the human soul, phantasms of the living and telepathic manifestations, can doubt for a single instant the authenticity of this transmission.

These unexplained observations have been made in all times and all lands. Moreover, have not premonitory signs always been told of? Of late, when I was going over the letters of Madame de Sévigné, always so curious, I noted, under the date of December 13, 1686, in a missive to President de Moulceau, the passage quoted below. We are here concerned with an apparition, strange enough, of a man in a shroud, in a window of the Château de Chantilly, three weeks before the death of the great Condé, which took place at Fontainebleau on December 11th. Let us read the account of it:

An extraordinary thing happened three weeks ago, shortly before Monsieur le prince left for Fontainebleau. One of his gentlemen, named Vernillon, who was returning from the hunt at three o'clock, drawing near the Château of Chantilly, the usual

³¹ As to these epithets, I repeat what I have already said, in Vol. I, pages 5-6. They simply show that my correspondents are not writing me in order to deceive me.

seat of the prince, saw, at a window of the weapon-chamber, a phantom, — that is to say, a man in a shroud. He got off his horse and approached; still he saw it; his valet, who was with him, said to him, “Monsieur, I see what you see.” Vernillon did not wish to tell him anything, lest he influence what he might say. They entered the château, and asked the doorkeeper to give them the key to the weapon-chamber; they went into it, and found all the windows closed, and a silence that had not been broken for more than six months. The prince was told of this. That is what happened. They say that this Vernillon is a sensible man, and as little capable of seeing imaginary visions as our friend Corbinelli; and, besides that, the valet saw the same apparition. Since this is a true story, I am telling it to you that you may reflect upon it, as we are doing. Since I began this letter I have seen Briole, who made me weep hot tears by his natural and sincere account of Condé’s death.

We think, very naturally, of optical illusions, so readily brought about, so frequent; but all those who have read Madame de Sévigné’s talks with the Abbot Corbinelli upon the objective and the subjective could not well put her in the category of ingenuous and credulous women. One may always call these stories nonsense, and think them merely fallacious. But this reasoning is far from satisfying us. It seems improbable that all these visions are purely imaginary. From the earliest days, not volumes but libraries have been written on the subject. This work is but an echo, a modest summary, brought about by the vibrations of present-day minds anxious to know, at last, reality.

Still, we must not rule out the possibility of optical illusions. For example, in the account which I made public, in my Memoirs, of Victor Hugo’s spiritualistic experiments in Jersey, in 1853, we may see on page 231 a photograph showing a window behind which a gray spot might be taken for a vague phantom.

The manifestation before death, which I am describing below is, certainly, incomprehensible; but what is still more incomprehensible is the reasoning of the person to whom the adventure occurred. An eminent savant, a friend of mine, wrote out for me recently the following narration (Letter 4173):

Yesterday, June 24, 1920, I had a visit from an old friend whom I had not seen for several years, and with whom I spoke of your latest book. Her husband committed suicide ten years ago, after unfortunate business ventures, of which he had not informed her. During the eight days — or, rather, the eight nights which preceded his suicide — she was regularly awakened, several times a night, by blows several times repeated, and in the same order, — at first on the window-blinds of her room, then on the door of this chamber, which opened on to a drawing-room. She would get up, would investigate; there was nothing, no one; and besides, there could be no one there. Her husband, who slept in the next room, with the door between the two rooms open, heard nothing. And yet the blows were violent. This phenomenon ended the day of the suicide, and has not occurred since.

I had all the circumstances explained to me minutely. I was, moreover, familiar with the apartment in which she lived at this time, and I concluded that it was a warning, of the same sort as certain others you have recorded. Do you know what she answered me?

“Oh, as for me, I’m very practical, and I don’t believe in all that foolishness! According to my way of thinking, some people were playing a silly practical joke on me.” — “But who? And why? And how?” — “I can’t find an explanation. I tried without success, to catch the jokers in the act: I found nothing. As for the blind, it might still be possible to believe that some one was striking it from the floor above or below with a long enough stick; but as for the door of the drawing-room, there is no explanation possible, since I took care to lock the other openings into this room. I don’t understand how it could have happened. But on this account to believe in the supernatural — never!”

So it goes.

The number of people that it is impossible to bring to a reasonable way of thinking, the number of those, who in their beliefs, as in their skepticism, are absolutely illogical, surpasses anything one can imagine. All the most convincing proofs that we might furnish them would be void and non-existent for them. All such people, if they know of occurrences which might be precious to you, will take care not to tell you of them. Such occurrences are, therefore, much more numerous than you think!

I have long shared the opinion of my learned correspondent. We are working only for free minds and for our own instruction. This lady is most intelligent and most sensible; but she thinks that in this case only the question of the supernatural is involved. Now, what is supernatural? Why bar the road by a word? (1) Her husband committed suicide; there is nothing commonplace even about this. (2) This suicide was preceded by noises which ceased after the tragedy — noises which she is sure of having heard distinctly, and equally sure of not being able to explain; this is not common place, either. Why not see here something interesting to investigate, to debate?

Warnings of death are so numerous that they must be admitted by everyone seriously considering them. To resolve to ignore them, even when they happen to you personally — that is, indeed, to make a strange use of one’s powers of reasoning.

As for explaining them, that is different from admitting them. Perhaps we may suppose, in this case, that when one determines to commit suicide, one experiences disagreeable sensations; that one thinks of it during the nights preceding the tragic act; that when sleep comes despite torment, it is more or less uneasy and may give rise to

physical and psychic phenomena of various sorts. The problem is not without interest.

The readers of this work are familiar with phantasms of the living. We are going to observe one particularly worth attention, — a young girl announcing her own death. Monsieur Bozzano has taken this incident from the *“Proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research”* (Volume XI, page 442) the narrator is the daughter of a major general.³²

My sister used to get up at five o'clock in the morning and go into my father's room (he was then indisposed) in order to take him tea and read to him until seven o'clock. One day I asked her to be so good as to awaken me, sometimes, at the hour when she got up. She refused, saying that I worked hard enough during the day and that I needed to stay in bed longer than she. The following morning (it was a Thursday) I woke early, and, to my great surprise, I saw her at the foot of the bed in a white nightgown, her manner joyous. She said to me: “Remember that I came to call you. Five o'clock is striking and *I am about to go away*. Remember this.” Shortly afterward I went to sleep again, and did not wake up until eight o'clock. At breakfast I said to my sister, “So you came to call me, after all.” She looked at me in surprise, and exclaimed, “No, I did not come!” — “Why!” I answered, “do you deny that you came in to me, and said to me: ‘Remember that I came to call you remember that I am about to go away?’” — “I tell you again,” she added, “that I didn't even go near your room.” I noted that she laid stress, in her questions, on the words she had spoken.

The following day, Friday, about six o'clock, when my sister was at the head of my father's bed, she suddenly felt indisposed. That morning she had got up feeling perfectly well. The following Friday, at five o'clock in the morning, — that is to say in a week's time from her apparition, — she was dying, and by a strange coincidence she was clothed in the nightgown of white muslin in which she had appeared when she showed herself to me.

Monsieur Bozzano thinks that this occurrence may be explained by telepathy. He says:

It is enough to suppose that during physiological sleep the subconscious mind of the young girl should have had a perception of her condition of latent illness, a perception which she might have transmitted telepathically to the subconscious minds of her relatives. This inference accords with the numerous classic examples of persons who have dreamed of being stricken by paralysis, or of being attacked by angina or by phlegm several days before feeling the least symptom in a state of wakefulness; it is also in accordance with the numerous examples given in the works of the hypnotists of former days, such as De Puységur, Du Potet, Deleuze, Bélot, Teste, in which their somnambulists foretold with precision not only the day and the hour of the crises in their illnesses, but also the day and the hour of their deaths. Given this, the supposed fact of a premonition would reduce itself to a simple case of self-examination in sleep (that is to say, to a much less extraordinary fact) combined with a telepathic transmission.

It appears to me that we are not in a position to lay down definitive theories.

We shall proceed methodically in our investigation. The chapters just read concerning phantasms of the living, thought as a generator of images, apparitions, and manifestations of the dying before death, and are only the prelude to the pictures which are to unroll before our eyes.

We shall prove that death-scenes and scenes of the dying may be seen from a distance, and have been, with a precision that it is impossible for us to explain by the theory of vague coincidences. A young woman, newly married before the war of 1914, saw her husband killed upon the battlefield, the day on which his last letter had just calmed her completely; a student saw one of his cousins, of whose illness he did not know, given the last sacrament, by a priest, on her death-bed, etc. Here are new documents, new observations for our psychic synthesis. Let us read on. Let us investigate.

³² *“Annales des Sciences Psychiques,”* 1907, p. 708.



THE VISIONING OF DEATH-SCENES

The possibilities in nature are infinite.
Huxley

Phantasms of the living, experimental apparitions of the living to the living, thought as a generator of images projected to a distance, apparitions and manifestations of the dying before death, — all these things belong to the realm of the living, even though they open a path for us toward the kingdom of the dead. Before entering this kingdom, we must further enlighten ourselves by means of certain guiding beams. The chapter we are beginning keeps us within the realm of action of the living; but it will not belong before the dying and the dead will testify for themselves. Beginning with the next chapter, they will reveal themselves through phenomena as varied as they are unexpected.

Let us continue by orderly process. The observers whose testimony we are about to hear have watched death-scenes taking place at a distance, by telepathic transmission; there are no effects without causes, and “the god Chance,” to whom these occurrences are always attributed, has nothing to do with them. Our point of departure is a human being, at the moment of death.

In the course of the war of 1914-18, which wrecked Europe by brutalizing all humanity to the last degree, and will put a drag on education in general for half a century to come, I received a great number of letters telling of telepathic transmissions sent from the battle-fields.

The study of these problems by positive science constantly encounters a thousand different obstacles. The chief of these, and that most frequently met with, is that in such cases we are concerned with sorrows which it is a pity to reawaken. In dealing with these, great tact alone will lead us to any valid proof.

Then, too, there is often involved a question of religious scruples, against which the wisest reasoning is vain. Such scruples are not always overcome. I thus feel a double gratitude to the devoted correspondent from whom I received the confidential letter which I here set down.

We must give this narration all the consideration it deserves. I have not changed a word of it.

Saint-Mandé, Seine, January 21, 1918.

My Dear Master:

I must tell you the following facts, for use in your important investigations.

Madame D— (it seems to us more discreet to give only the initial of the name, since the occurrence is still so recent), a young woman who at the time of mobilization had been married only a few months, adored her husband, who returned her love. Separation had been cruel, in spite of the bravery of the young man, who seemed desirous of persuading his wife that he felt certain of his early return.

He had even begged her not to believe any news of him which might reach her, whatever its nature. The days went by, without letters from him. Then came short health bulletins and, at last, on August 25, 1914, Madame D— received a long letter from the soldier. Happy and full of confidence, she regained a little gaiety. The afternoon of that day there was a family reunion. She asked her younger sister to sit down at the piano and play a ballad of Chopin for her, — one that she and her husband particularly loved. Her sister did so. Suddenly (it was three o'clock) the young woman rose, uttered a cry, a terrible cry, and fell to the floor senseless. When she came to herself, they questioned her. Opening frightened eyes, she exclaimed:

“What I have seen is dreadful. Dreadful!”

The family, affected by the poor woman's intense nervousness, did not dare to press her. It was only upon the second day following, when she seemed a little calmer, that she told them she had seen, abruptly unrolled before her eyes, — a terrifying field of battle, horrible slaughter, and, *in the midst of it all, her dear husband, falling dead!*

Some days afterward they learned that on August 25th, at three o'clock, this soldier had been mortally hurt.

The young woman's mother and several members of her family furnished me confirmation of this dramatic scene. The coincidence of the vision and of what happened on the field of battle is beyond question.

I am sending you, with this, the letter from her mother and from her friend; but they desire that these painful memories

shall not be reawakened.

Such is, dear Master, a brief account of the investigation that I was able to make into the case of this family, — a family that is trying, if possible, to enfold with a little forgetfulness this young woman, who is in despair at the terrible separation, depressed and impressionable to the last degree.

The fact of telepathic communication is clearly beyond doubt, and this seems to me a useful document to add to those which are sent to you from all parts of the world.

Madame A. Mercier

(Letter 4016)

Objections might be raised. In the course of continuous warfare it is not surprising that a young woman who worshiped her husband should have feared for his safety. The worth of the facts related does not lie in this intuition, but in the precise coincidence of the day and of the hour with the moment of the catastrophe, a catastrophe which happened on the exact day when this poor woman had attained peace of mind! And it lies in the vision of the battle. The laws of probability prove that the chances of this being telepathic communication, beyond doubt, are as a million to one.

My readers are already familiar with a certain number of instances identical with the one presented, and may remember that one of them even indicated death on a date differing from that given by the army bureaus; a date which, when verified, was found to be exact. The official date was not.³³

It will not be amiss to note that this experience of the young woman cannot be likened to a dream which might correspond to reality by a chance coincidence, but is comparable to an electric shock received from a distance, — a very different thing. In this case the telepathic communication from the young officer who was killed, to his wife, at that moment calm and even happy as a result of the letter received that same day, is as beyond question as a precisely recorded observation in astronomy, physics, or chemistry. The exactness is similar.

As for the explanation, that is still to be found. Our knowledge of this subject is comparable to knowledge of electricity in the days of Galvani, or astronomy at the time of Ptolemy. We are at present at the dawn of a future science.

I am in possession of a great deal of testimony of this kind, — the visioning of death-scenes at a distance. They are of all dates; but we cannot here give more than a few.

On March 17, 1863, in Paris, in a first-floor apartment, at 26 rue Pasquier, behind the Madeleine, the Baroness de Boislève was giving a dinner to several persons, among them General Fleury, Master of the Horse to Napoleon Third, Monsieur Devienne, the first President of the Court of Cassation, Monsieur Delesvaux, President of the Court for Civil Causes of the Seine. During the meal, conversation turned chiefly on the Mexican Expedition, sent out a year before. The son of the Baroness, Honoré de Boislève, a lieutenant of light cavalry, was a member of the expedition, and his mother had not failed to ask General Fleury if the Government had received any news.

It had had none. No news is good news. The banquet drew gaily to a close, the guests remaining seated until nine o'clock. At that hour Madame de Boislève rose and went into the drawing-room alone, that she might see that coffee was served. Scarcely had she entered the room when the guests were alarmed by a terrible cry. They rushed into the drawing-room to find the baroness in a dead faint, stretched at full length upon the carpet.

When brought back to consciousness she told them an extraordinary story. Stepping through the doorway, she had seen at the other end of the room her son Honoré, erect, in uniform, but unarmed and without his soldier's cap. The officer's face was a spectral pallor, and from his left eye, now a hideous hole, a trickle of blood flowed over his cheek and over the embroidery of his collar. So intense had been the poor woman's fear that she had thought she was going to die. They hastened to reassure her by pointing out to her that she had been the victim of a hallucination, that she had dreamed, though wide awake; but, as she felt inexpressibly weak, the family physician was urgently summoned. He was the illustrious Nélaton. He was informed of the strange adventure, prescribed sedatives, and withdrew. The next day the baroness had recovered physically, but her mind was strongly impressed. She sent each day to the Ministry of War, to ask for news.

³³ See "*L'Inconnu*," pp. 194—196: Captain Wheatcroft, killed before Lucknow on November 14, 1857, appeared to his wife, in Cambridge, at the hour of the battle.

At the end of a week she was officially informed that on March 17, 1863, at ten minutes to three in the afternoon, in the attack on Puebla, Honoré do Boislevé had been killed instantly by a Mexican bullet, which had pierced his left eye and gone through his head. When the difference in time was allowed for, the hour of his death corresponded exactly to the moment of his apparition in the drawing-room of the rue Pasquier.

Dr. Nélaton sent his colleagues of the Academy of Sciences a statement of the event, written from beginning to end by President Devienne, and signed by all the guests at the famous dinner.

This visioning of death-scenes at a distance is not as rare as one might think. The two preceding cases are remarkable in that they did not take place during sleep, in a dream, as most of them do. The same is true of the following. It happened in broad daylight, perhaps in a state of momentary somnolence. I received an account of it in March, 1899.

It was in 1888. The mother of one of my friends, a student of medicine, was ill. One day his father, probably fearing an early death, sent him for his aunt, who lived in a village fifty kilometers from their city.

My friend had to travel by carriage. During this trip he had the following vision:

His mother, lying in her room, had her hands crossed on her breast, holding a crucifix; her eyes were closed, and the pallor of her face was that of someone dead. Her relatives were around the bed, weeping. Even the room in which his mother lay was hung with funeral emblems.

This sudden had been so distinct, and my friend had been so frightened by it, that he uttered a cry. When the coachman, hearing this cry and seeing his pallor, had learned the reason, he made sport of him.

When he reached the house he was startled to see his visionary picture real! He found, too, that the event had occurred *about* the time he had had the vision. I say *about*, for my friend had not thought of noting the exact time; but he well remembers that the two occurrences took place before noon, and the death preceded the vision.

It is to be noted that my friend was then sixteen, and that his father, when he sent him for his aunt, had not told him of the seriousness of his mother's illness; moreover, the father, himself, did not believe the end so near.

I am giving you my name, but do not divulge it; my future career might suffer if you did.

W.

Student of medicine in Bordeaux

(Letter 302)

This was a vision experienced in a carriage. The following case is similar, and it could not be taken exception to, either, on the grounds that the number and the diversity of dreamt explain the coincidence.

A Paris official, in an omnibus, was present at the death of his mother, who he did not know was ill.

My late lamented friend Dr. Durand de Gros informed me, in days gone by, of the following curious experiences of a clerk, a friend of the doctor, in the Paris Central Postal and Telegraph Office. Let us read this account, which he wrote to his brother:

I came out of the office about half-past five and took the omnibus which runs from Grenelle to the Saint-Martin gate. During the whole day I had not had a single thought about the region where we spent our childhood. Suddenly, when I had got to the rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, I had a very distinct vision of poor Mamma lying in her bed, ill I had the feeling that she was going to die, and I remember that, in the sort of dream I had, I said to her, "Wait, Mamma, I'm coming." I had no illusions as to her condition, and I felt drawn, so to speak, to the other world. This made me wish to die, too.

I cannot explain the state of mind in which I was, but this much is certain: I saw myself most distinctly at the foot of Mamma's bed; she was pale and ill, and she recognized me. It was about six o'clock; I was in the omnibus with my friend Léon.

When I got back to where I lived, at eleven o'clock at night, the janitor gave me a telegram, and I must say that I thought at once of what had happened to me in the omnibus, and did not for an instant doubt that the telegram would announce her death. I did not go to bed, waiting impatiently for daylight that I might leave. Leon was with me when I got back, and when I received the telegram I told him what had happened to me in the omnibus. He then told me that, as a matter of fact, I had seemed "very queer" at that moment, and that I had answered him incoherently. He can vouch for the facts. It seems, too, that during the remainder of the evening I was not myself. This singular occurrence made a deep impression on me, which is as fresh in my memory as on the first day. Usually the sight of a dying person is painful, but,, in my case, I repeat that I felt, rather, the satisfaction of being sure of immortality.

We have there an impression experienced, very simply, in an omnibus. For this reason it is only the more

striking. It was the visioning at a distance of an unforeseen death. This was no vague dream, or vision on the part of someone nervously ill: it was a normal impression.

The following observation was likewise made by one in good health, in broad daylight. A London physician, who died at a distance, was seen from the environs of the English capital, in the room where he died unexpectedly.³⁴ The vision took place ten hours after his death. Madame Dyne, the observer, writes:

This physician had had me in his care for several years, and had been very kind to me. At the time of his death more than a year had passed since I had been in his charge. I knew that he was no longer practicing medicine, but I knew nothing of his circumstances, nor the state of his health. When I saw him for the last time he seemed particularly well, and he even made some remark about his vigor and the activity which he was still capable of.

On Thursday, December 16, 1875, I had for sometime been visiting at the home of my brother-in-law and my sister, near London; I was in good health, but since morning and during the whole day I had felt oppressed; I was not myself, as they say, and I attributed this to the gloomy weather. After lunch, about two o'clock, I conceived the idea of going up to the children's room, to play with them and to try to be myself again. But I did not succeed, and went back into the dining-room, where I remained, seated quite alone. Thoughts of the doctor came into my mind, and suddenly, with my eyes wide open, I believe (for I did not feel sleepy), it seemed to me that I was in a room in which a dead man was lying on a little bed. At once I recognized the doctor, and I had no doubt that he was dead, and not merely asleep. The room was without a carpet and without furniture. I cannot say how long the vision lasted. I tried to prove to myself that what I had seen had no meaning, above all because, from what I knew of the doctor's circumstances, it was improbable that if he had died he would be in a room that was so simple, so bare of furniture. About ten days afterward one of my sisters read in the newspapers that the doctor had died abroad, on December 16th, the very day on which I had seen the apparition.

The investigation made to verify the details of this narrative established that the doctor died in the hospital of a little village, in a warm country, and succumbed to a more or less sudden illness. The doctor's widow made it known that the room in which her husband died corresponded to the description given above.

The hypothesis that, in this case, there was a simple hallucination and a chance coincidence with reality, plainly unexpected and exceptional, is not admissible. Why should this lady have unconsciously imagined the death-scene of a celebrated physician, who died in a poor room, on a journey, — imagined it upon the day on which his corpse was in that precise spot? To be content with such an "explanation" is really not sufficient. There is something else, the faculty of seeing at a distance as a result of an impression emanating from the dead or dying person.

The vision did not take place at the moment of death, but ten hours afterward.

The authors of "Phantasms of the Living," for the sake of consistency with their title, explain the difference in the time by saying that the doctor's thought was transmitted to this lady before his death, and that the mental impression remained latent for ten hours, until a tranquil moment, when the transmission could be conscientiously perceived. That there was intercommunication between the dying man and the seer is not to be doubted. This intercommunication seems to have brought the seer really to perceive, from a distance, the bed and the room; that is to say, her thought was borne to that spot. As to the delay in perception, the comparison of numerous facts will, perhaps, clear up the problem gradually.

This visioning of those dying at a distance is as indubitable as it is astounding. Here is another example. Let us note that in all these cases there is no question of nocturnal dreams.

A young girl of fifteen, seated before the fire, had the feeling that her father was dying several kilometers away. The "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*" of 1895 published (page 284) a most curious letter from Monsieur C. Thiéry, telling this story in the following words:

About thirty-five years ago a young girl who was staying with me had gone, with her mother, to take over an inheritance of an old uncle, who was dead, — the parish priest some leagues from there.

She was a child of from twelve to fifteen, of a very nervous — I might say a rather over-excitable — temperament, which she got from her family.

One day, seated before the fire, self-absorbed, her head in her hands, she saw, as though inwardly, what was going on at that moment at her father's home: she saw him dying, was present at his death and the attendant happenings. That very day she told the persons of her immediate circle of this strange vision.

Naturally, they did not believe what they considered wild statements. But she persisted in declaring that her father was

³⁴ "*Phantasms of the Living*," I, 205; "*Hallucinations télépathiques*," p. 84.

dead, though she had left him in good health, and she harassed her mother to such an extent that the latter was obliged to take her back home. Up to that time they had heard nothing of the father. When they were some kilometers away — seven or eight — and had received no news, and since no one believed in her vision, she thought she had been the victim of an illusion, and began to sing, to shout, to gesticulate, child-like, to show her joy. But then it was that a native of the region, coming from their neighborhood, shouted at her: “You’re right to make so much noise; your father is dead.”

It was true; her father was dead: what she had seen was confirmed. In this case, then, there was not the least deception. This person is still living, and is the mother of a family.

If you would like to have more details I might put you in touch with her.

C. Thiéry

Upon this invitation, an inquiry was made. Here is one of the letters received from the percipient of the vision, Madame Marie Jacques:

If I had known that more than thirty years afterward I should be asked for my story, I should have written it down. Today, however, I must summon it to mind; well, I shall try to remember.

(1) You asked me my father’s name: Charles-Antoine-Dominique Jacques.

(2) The priest to whom I first told my dream was Monsieur Chartier, parish priest of Masela he died fifteen years ago.

(3) I also told it in Saint-Die, at the home of the priest of the Faubourg Saint-Martin, where we spent the night. The poor man did everything he could to dissuade me from my conviction. I recall, too, that I bought some socks in Saint-Die; I wanted black ones, for I said: “I’m going to be in mourning, since Papa is dead.” This parish priest was Canon Fleury.

Marie Feys, too, might have told of this occurrence: it was she who went with me to the burial, together with Thérèse Gardeur, but both of them are dead, also.

(4) You ask me how I saw Papa die? In this way: I was seated before the fire, my head in my hands; in thought I was at home; I saw my Father in his bed, looking as though he were dying. Suddenly I saw his eyes roll, then I cried: “Oh, heavens, he’s dying!” I was like some one crazed. It was for this reason that I wished to leave at once. All along the road, as soon as I saw a person, I said, “There is a messenger they are sending us.”

(5) On the hill near Portieux, Monsieur Pasquier passed by and saw us. “So it’s you, my poor ladies,” he said to us. “They are waiting for you, for the funeral; he was ill with an attack for twenty-four hours; he received the last sacraments and asked for you again and again.”

Marie Jacquet

The examination of the civil registry of the town of Charmes established that Charles-Antoine-Dominique Jacquet, son of the deceased Dominique-Victor Jacquet and Anne-Françoise Magnien, husband of Marie-Marguerite Antoine, died on October 12, 1860, in Charmes.

Charmes, September 14, 1893

[Signed] P. Voinot, Mayor.

We see that despite the thirty-five years intervening between the occurrence and the narrative, the recollections of the writer, Monsieur Thiéry, agree with those of Madame Marie Jacquet. The young girl had a perception of her father’s death. This was an example of vision at a distance; was it a telepathic transmission from the dying man?

In this case, as well as in the preceding cases, there was no dream. The sensations were felt in a normal condition. The case of which we are about to learn is a nocturnal vision, complicated by a premonition, still more difficult to understand than vision at a distance. I recently received an account of it, on June 20, 1920, through a distinguished writer already known to my readers, Monsieur R. de Maratray, and it concerns his father. We might call it “Death-Scene Perceived Twenty-Four Hours in Advance.” Here it is:

About 1855, Monsieur de Maratray, who afterward became a proficient engineer, and who was then twenty years old, woke up one night in his house in Blois, torn by the greatest anguish, under the spell of a dream in which he had just seen a death-scene of this sort: a young cousin of whom he was particularly fond, but of whose illness he did not even know, was stretched out on her bed in her Rouen house; a priest was administering the last sacrament; her father and mother were on their knees, weeping. The morning of the following day the mail brought the news that this young girl (named Blanche) was seriously ill. Monsieur de Maratray left at once and arrived at Rouen in the middle of the following night; he was immediately led into a room which he had never seen before, and which was the replica, in every detail, of the room he had dreamed of the preceding night, and he was present at the death of his cousin, — in the very posture in which he had seen himself twenty-four hours previously. To the end of his life this memory was fresh in his mind.

(Letter 4168)

This vision gains in significance from the fact of the pre monition twenty-four hours in advance. How many mysteries!

There is not this complication in the example which follows, but it is nonetheless striking in its instantaneous nature. We are concerned in this case with the visioning at a distance (from Nouméa to Cherbourg), in a dream, of a death-agony. It was described to me in 1918, during my stay in Cherbourg, by a trustworthy technical expert of the navy. Here is his narrative:

In doing my military service in the colonial artillery I had, at the end of five months, been chosen to serve in New Caledonia.

I sailed from Marseilles on September 3, 1895, and arrived at Nouméa on October 13th.

In leaving my family I had said farewell to them, particularly to my father's brother, who had been ill for some months.

The first night that I slept in Nouméa (that of October 12th to October 13th) I had a dream in which I was present at the moment of my uncle's death.

I awakened the next morning, extremely tired, my mind obsessed by this prophetic dream.

What was my surprise and my bewilderment to receive, forty or fifty days afterward (letters take about this time to come from France), the announcement of my uncle's death, which occurred on October 12th, in the course of the day.

I was deeply impressed, for I had not forgotten the dream, and shall never forget it.

You know better than I, Master, that in consequence of the longitude in which Nouméa is, the days are about ten hours in advance of ours.

A strange coincidence — is it not one well calculated to disturb our minds!

Upon my return to France I told my family of this coincidence, and since then I have often spoken of it to friends.

If this experience can be of interest to you in your investigations, I shall be happy to have related it to you. You may, if you think it helpful, publish this story, but I must ask you not to print my name.

E. C.,

Technical naval expert in Cherbourg

I wrote to the signer of this interesting narrative (designated in the course of my inquiry by the number 4040) to ask him (1) to allow me to publish his name, as a complete guarantee to my readers; he did not give me this authorization, but allowed me to give his initials and his calling, printed above; (2) to ask him where his uncle was when the telepathic transmission took place at the moment of his death; if it were at Marseilles, at Cherbourg, or elsewhere. The reply was La Glacerie, a district on the outskirts of Cherbourg, a region that I myself know, — a celebrated village which owes its name to the first glass-factory built in France by Colbert (afterward moved to Saint-Gobain). Here one may still see today the first object glasses made for the Paris Observatory in the year 1672, the date of its establishment, — primitive object glasses which remain of great historical interest to us. I have held them respectfully in my hands.

The difference in longitude given is exact. The coincidence of the dream with the event was real. Was it fortuitous? This is not probable. Everything leads us to admit that there was in this case telepathic transmission between the aunt and the nephew. Certainly, the latter might have thought of his sick uncle and, in a dream, have seen him dying, without there being any direct communication between the two. But these cases of coincidence are so numerous that mere chance does not suffice to explain them to our entire satisfaction. It is by comparing all these facts that we may enlighten ourselves fully. Let us not disdain a single one.

This took place in 1895. We know, today, that the transmission of psychic waves between two brains separated by great distances is comparable to that of the ether-waves of wireless telegraphy.

My readers may remember the story of a most circumstantial dream, — an account of how a nephew was with his uncle at his last moments and saw all the details of these last moments. (The encyclopedic Pierre Conil, then a student at the Saint-Louis Lyceum, and his uncle, dying at Courbevoie: see "L'Inconnu," page 460.)

They have also read ("Before Death," page 159) the story of a notary who, in a dream, saw his father dead, stretched out upon mattresses placed on boards, at a time when the scene was taking place at a great distance from

his home. Doubt is no longer possible.

The following experience is not less surprising than those we know already; it is one of the earliest of my investigation:

Chartres, March 26, 1899.

My father's relatives were occupying, in Batignolles, an apartment in a house in which a branch of the Cunéo d'Ornano family lived, and mutual neighborly relations had been entered into. On the occasion of the baptism of a child which had just been born in the Ornano's home, my aunt found herself at a dinner, beside Monsieur Thadée Cunéo d'Ornano, who had, I believe, been the baby's godfather. She was greatly struck by the intellectual leanings of the gentleman next her, and she herself was charming in all respects. So nothing was more natural than that they should have retained, for some hours at least, the best mutual impressions. The very evening of this dinner, Monsieur Thadée Cunéo d'Ornano left Paris, on an evening train, to return to the South. That same night, at an hour I cannot give exactly, my aunt saw distinctly, at the foot of her bed, the bloody head of the man who had sat beside her at table. When, the next day, she told of this apparition, no one attached any importance to it; but a short time afterward my relatives learned with astonishment that the very night of the apparition, at a time which coincided with that of my aunt's vision, Monsieur Thadée Cunéo d'Ornano had had his head carried away at the entrance to a tunnel, when he was leaning from the door of his railway carriage.

It would be easy, I think, to learn from the Ornano family the exact time of this happening.

One of your assiduous readers,

who does not sign his name because it is useless, and because his fatuous colleagues would accuse him of being ingenuous and gullible.

(Letter 91)

The objection, so often made, that these are chance coincidences, is inadmissible in most of the cases investigated. I have told elsewhere of the proportion which may be attributed to chance, according to the law of probability. In "*Les Hallucinations Télépathiques*" Monsieur Marrillier has made, on his own account, certain calculations, from which it appears that the part played by chance is reduced, for auditory hallucinations, to 1/20,000,000,000,000 and for visual hallucinations to 1/40,000,000,000,000; that is to say, in forty trillion visual hallucinations there would be only one that could be explained by *chance coincidence*.

Plainly, this reduces the hypothesis of chance to a number equivalent to zero; it follows that it is not possible to take it into account in explaining the numberless proved coincidences; it is the proof, as well, that these psychic manifestations are real, objective, since, when chance has been eliminated, facts themselves are the only real source.

In cases, like the foregoing, in which a death-scene is perceived, there is no law of probability to be taken into account: there is the evidence itself.

The visioning of death-scenes at a distance and premonitory dreams of death are so very numerous that those who study these questions, definitely regard them as an addition to psychic science, as indisputable, and think it almost superfluous to augment these accounts. I shall, however, give the following facts, indubitably authentic, the knowledge of which I owe to my learned friend Prince Troubetzkoy. This astronomer wrote me from his observatory in Bergamo, on October 20, 1920:

Dear Master:

In this very place Monsieur Aurelio Bonandrini, a doctor of law, my notary, has just told me that he had, twenty years ago, a dream so striking, so horribly painful, that it will always remain in his memory; he never will be able to forget it.

In this dream he saw his father, then in good health, in bed, at the point of death, in a little room unknown to him.

A year afterward his father was stricken, in the cathedral, with an attack of apoplexy; he was carried into a near-by hotel where he expired after some hours. What was the terror of his son, when, called in all haste to the bed of the dying man, he recognized the bed, his father's posture, and the room, just as he had seen them in the dream!

(Letter 4287)

The man who had the dream gave this confirmation:

I can vouch for the exactitude of the facts related above by Prince Troubetzkoy.

Aurelio Bonandrini

In another letter Prince Troubetakoy had already told me of his mother-in-law's visioning, at a distance, an accident about which, fortunately, there was nothing fatal. He wrote:

We were in the country, and had installed a hammock in the garden, to the joy of my son, who was then five. My wife's younger sister arrived to spend some days, and after that the two of them never left the hammock, which had become a swing.

One evening the little boy, terrified, came running to us; one of the cords had broken, they had fallen, the young girl had struck her head, and we found her in a faint. For more than twenty-four hours the physician feared complications; he had to make applications of ice, etc. In short, she was delirious during the whole night, loudly calling her mother, who was more than 150 kilometers away.

The day following the next there came a letter, full of grief, from the mother, telling of this accident, which she had seen in a dream, and asking, in anguish, if it were true.

Prince Troubetzkoy

(Letter 4272)

How can one still doubt these psychic phenomena of vision and sensations perceived at a distance? We have only to stoop in order to pluck them from the garden of human memories.

Dr. Foissac, the head physician of the academy of the *Légion d'Honneur* in Saint-Denis, told me, a quarter of a century ago, that Admiral Le Roy's brother, sailing the open seas, had awakened in the middle of the night, under the spell of a nightmare in which he had been present at his mother's death; having entered this dream in his note-book, he ascertained upon landing that on that date, at that hour, his mother had breathed her last.

That, too, was the visioning of a death-scene at a distance. Space is lacking for the publishing of numerous accounts I have received. To point to them may sometimes suffice. Thus, for example, Audibert, a sea captain living in Antibes, sent me on May 31, 1899, a circumstantial account of the visioning at a distance, in a dream, of his mother's death in Marseilles, while he was sailing distant seas.

(Letter 724)

The writer even solemnized this fact, devoutly, in a little poem.

Certain of these visions are veritable tragedies. Such as the following:

A lady's brother was far away, in the Indies; she did not know where he was. In a dream she saw his head, cut off, lying in a coffin at the foot of her bed! This lady was Mrs. Menner, the wife of the president of Torre College, in Torquay, and her brother was Mr. Wellington, then with the *Baja* of Sarawak, Sir James Brooke. Captured by the Chinese, as the son of the raja, on an expedition, his head was cut off. They had burned his body and kept his head, which they had borne in triumph, and which, found by Wellington's friends, was buried by them. Meyers and Sidgwick, who made a special investigation of this most curious case, ascertained that the vision had coincided with the tragic event.³⁵

Of all the death-scenes perceived with exactness by telepathic vision, the following is certainly one of the most circumstantial. It was Mr. Henry Sidgwick who made it known.³⁶ The observer wished his name not to be published, for fear of displeasing the relatives of the deceased. Here is his story:

The event which I shall relate took place on the morning of July 8, 1858.

The evening of the seventh, I spent a long time with a friend, talking on different subjects. He was at ease and good-humored. I went calmly back home.

I must now tell how my bedroom was arranged. It had only one window, near the head of the bed and in the wall beside which I was lying. The window-blinds were not completely lowered.

That night — or, rather, the morning of the eighth — I woke up with a feeling of anguish. It was day, and light was shed on the floor through the slats of the blinds; there, in this light, that was sufficiently intense, I had a vision of my friend. He was lying on the floor, in his night-clothes, his knees lifted, his hands thrown back, the palms upward. He was extremely pale, his jaw fallen, as though dead. I uttered quite a loud groan, which awakened my wife; she took my arm and shook me, asking me what the matter was. I was leaning on my elbow, looking down at the apparition. I answered, "I see X— dead on the floor." As I spoke, the apparition vanished. My wife answered that I was dreaming. I remember having asked myself, "Am I dreaming?"

³⁵ "Phantasms of the Living," I, 365; Human Personality, I, 424.

³⁶ "Annales des Sciences Psychiques," 1892, p. 225.

before my wife shook me, and while the vision was distinct. The phantom's feet were toward the window, and its face was turned almost directly to me and toward the light.

I went to the offices, which adjoined X—'s house. Since the latter had not appeared during the whole morning, the clerk told me that his charwoman was uneasy, not having been able to get any response when she knocked on the door. At once the vision of the morning came into my mind, and I had them look for a ladder and climb up to the window, which was not very high. The clerk went up, and had such a surprise that he almost fell from the ladder. He had just seen X—, stretched out on the floor!

He took a great hammer used in breaking coal, and forced the door in. I went into the room with him. The body was lying on the floor, in exactly the attitude, the position, and the costume of the vision that I had had. It was the exact replica of this vision. He must have got up, half opened the blind, and, feeling himself the victim of an attack of angina, have tried to pour himself some ammonia, into a glass; but, in making this effort, he had fallen back, dead. His charwoman informed me that it was his habit to get up at daylight and to draw the blind.

Is it possible to maintain that the intensity of thought of a man in his death-agony may produce the effect which I felt? His lawful heir was a man for whom he felt the greatest disapproval, while he had a nephew of whom he was intensely fond. He had a large fortune, and might have left everything to this nephew. In a search among his papers a will was found, which he had begun to make with this object.

I have thought of all this for many years; I have discussed it with many people, but I have never been able to reach a reasonable solution of the problem.

The feeling of anguish which I felt on awakening was indescribable. It was somewhat like the emotion felt when one awakens with a start, and finds oneself facing some terrible sight. Thirty-three years have now passed since this happened, and each detail is still as clear in my memory as though the thing had happened yesterday.

The investigation made by the English Society for Psychical Research confirmed this story, taken as a whole, with the exception of some variations in detail.

Doubt that in certain circumstances our minds perceive death-scenes occurring at a distance is, really, no longer to be countenanced. The visioning of which we have just spoken is most dramatic in its very exactitude. That about to be placed before our eyes is not less so, — is, perhaps, still more remarkable, because of the distance from the scene of action.

The tragic accident to a son, drowned from a boat, in New York, was seen by his anguished mother, living in London. Let us listen to this story.³⁷

Mr. Clarke, one of the leading merchants of Hull, had known for more than twenty years a certain Mrs. Palliser who lived in this same city. She had but one child, a son named Matthew, who was a sailor. At the age of about twenty-two, he sailed for New York. About a month after his departure Mrs. Palliser sought out Mr. Clarke and told him, weeping:

“Oh, Mr. Clarke, poor Mat has been drowned!”

“How can you know that I?”

“He was drowned last night, as he was going on board; when he was walking along the gang-plank it slipped. *I saw it, and I heard him call: ‘Oh, Mother!’*”

She affirmed that she had been in bed at that moment, but wide awake; she also declared that she had seen her own mother, dead for many years, at the foot of her bed, weeping. “It is imaginary,” Mr. Clarke told her, “and there is nothing credible about it.” But she persisted in her conviction and went to see Mr. Clarke perhaps half a dozen times the following week. To calm her he wrote to New York, to the purser of the ship on which her son was. After the letter had been sent, she continued to come, each week, to ask news. At the end of about a month a letter arrived from New York, addressed to Mrs. Palliser in care of Mr. Clarke. It contained news of the death: Matthew Palliser, of such and such a ship, had been drowned on such and such a night, because the gang plank had slipped while he was crossing, to go aboard. The night was that during which Mrs. Palliser had had her vision.

Mr. Clarke characterized Mrs. Palliser as well bred, a respectable woman of sixty-five, a widow for some years.

The Rev. J. P. Fowler, of Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham, has vouched for this same occurrence.

In conversation, Mr. Clarke's son also confirmed this story, about which there cannot be the shadow of a doubt.

How is it possible not to see, in this, a direct communication from the son to the mother, at the moment

³⁷ See “*Phantasms of the Living*,” I, 449; *Hallucination télépathiques*, p. 148; Myers, “*Human Personality*,” II, 33 and 343.

when he had fallen, and was about to perish in the waves?

Let us repeat it a hundred times: to deny this phenomenon is simply ridiculous.

Here is an observed occurrence almost identical with that just read. I am purposely putting them in this order, for the edification of my readers, who have, I hope, no fixed prejudices still remaining.

A lady residing in England saw her brother drowning in America. Let us listen to this story:

On October 24, 1889, Edmund Dunn, brother of Mrs. Agnes Paquet, was employed as stoker and machinist on the *Wolf*, a little steamer which to boats in the port of Chicago. About three o'clock in the afternoon the tug was attached to a vessel, to draw it up the river. While adjusting the buoy Mr. Dunn fell overboard and was drowned. The body was not found for three weeks after the accident, when it came to the surface near the spot where Mr. Dunn had disappeared.

The observer describes her experience in these words:

"I rose, the morning of the day of the accident, at the usual time; it must have been six o'clock. I had slept well. I woke up, sad, depressed, without being able to shake off this uneasiness. After breakfast my husband left for his work; the children went to school, leaving me alone in the house. Shortly afterward, I decided to make some tea and to drink it. I went into the pantry and took up the tea-caddy, and, turning, I saw before me, some feet away, my brother Edmund, — or his exact image. The phantom was almost turning its back to me; it leaned forward, as if it were falling, drawn by two ropes, or by the coil of a rope pulling its legs. The vision lasted only an instant, but it was most distinct. I dropped the tea, hid my face in my hands, and cried: "Good heavens! Edmund's been drowned!"

About half-past ten in the morning my husband got a telegram from Chicago, telling him that my brother was drowned. When he got home he told me: "Edmund is ill; he's in a hospital in Chicago; I've just got a telegram." I answered: "Edmund was drowned; I saw him fall into the water." I then gave him a detailed description of what I had seen. I said that my brother, when I saw him, was bareheaded, that he wore a blue sailor's shirt and no coat, and that he had been pulled over a hand-rail, or railing. I noticed that his trousers were turned up and showed the white lining I also described the appearance of the boat at the spot where my brother had fallen.

I am not nervous, and neither before nor afterward did anything like this ever happen to me.

My brother was subject neither to spells of weakness nor to dizziness.

Agnes Paquet

The narrator's husband confirmed this story in every detail.³⁸

There is no doubt of its authenticity.

That the seer had this vision, without any cause, is inadmissible. This cause must be sought in an emotion of the brother transmitted to the sister. It was a message from a dying man.

Thus, the observer not only had a strong impression concerning her brother, at an hour very near that of his death, not only did she know that he had just died, but she saw a more or less exact reproduction of the scene of his death.

It will have been noted that the impression did not take effect at the very moment of the happening, but about six hours afterward. It was preceded by a feeling of depression, beginning at the moment of awakening, and one is, at first, tempted to believe that the narrator saw the happening in a dream and forgot it, and that the subsequent vision was the result of a revival of the dream in her memory; but we do not know enough to assert this. We shall continue our explanations in Volume III, in connection with a certain Madame Stone, who saw her brother crushed by a train under circumstances altogether bizarre.

Let us seek further enlightenment in other examples.

The Society for Psychological Research related (Volume V, page 420) the following facts, an account of which was sent to the society by Mrs. Green, a correspondent, on January 21, 1885. We are concerned with a dream.

I was looking at two ladies, elegantly attired, in an open carriage, when their horses stopped before some water to drink, but overbalanced and plunged into the sheet of water. As a result, these two ladies stood up and called for help. Their hats fell off their heads, and as all were about to sink, I cried out: "Isn't there any one to rescue them?" Then I woke up and my

³⁸ "Annales des Sciences Psychiques," 1891, p. 208; Oliver Lodge, *La Survivance humaine*, French translation, 1912, p. 82; "Proceedings Society of Psychological Research," III, 33

husband asked me what had made me call out in this way. I told him my dream, and he asked me if I knew these people. I did not know them, and had never seen them. I was, none the less, much affected during the whole day. It was my son's birthday, and mine, also, January 10th, and it is because of this coincidence that I remember the date exactly.

Three months afterward, I received a letter and newspapers from my brother, who was in Australia, telling me of his sorrow in having lost one of his daughters, who had died by drowning, on a drive with a friend. The account of the accident corresponded exactly with what I had seen in my dream. My niece was born in Australia, and I did not know her.

Numerous attestations have confirmed the exactitude of this account. The bodies of the two ladies were found clasped together and pressed one against the other.

In "*Phantasms of the Living*" this is also related (case 138, Volume I, page 375) as well as in Myers's "Human Personality" (Volume I, page 431). The vision did not coincide with the accident, Myers says, but followed it by more than twelve hours. He speaks of it again in Volume II (page 55) and seeks to explain this dream, but without success, as a telepathic transmission from someone dead or dying.

Since Australia is on the opposite side of the globe from Europe, when it is night in London it is day in Melbourne, and it is possible that the time of Mrs. Green's dream coincided with that of the accident. Did the newspapers give the exact date of this last? A mistake of a day is easily made. The only time that has been precisely determined seems to me to be that of the dream. But whence can the telepathic transmissions have come? Perhaps from Mrs. Green's brother, at the time when he was being told of the deplorable accident that had happened to his daughter. Myers asks himself if there may not, in this case, have been spiritual intervention: "I conjecture that a current of influence may be started by a deceased person." This vision is, certainly, most extraordinary.

These distant telepathic transmissions may take place, in cases of serious accident, without death following.

A lady saw her husband wounded, 240 kilometers away, in a battle; she saw him take a ring from his finger, to send it to her. Mrs. Richardson wrote, on August 26, 1882, to the English Society for Psychical Research.³⁹

On September 9, 1848, at the siege of Multan, my husband, Major-General Richardson, Knight of the Bath, then adjutant of his regiment, was very seriously wounded, and, believing that he was going to die, asked one of the officers with him to take the ring he wore on his finger, and to send it to his wife, who was at that time at Firozpur, at a distance of at least 150 English miles. During the night of September 9, 1848, I was in bed, half asleep, when I saw, distinctly, my wounded husband, carried from the field of battle, and I heard his voice, saying: "Take this ring from my finger, and send it to my wife." During the whole of the next day it was impossible for me to rid myself of the impression caused by what I had seen and heard. I learned, shortly afterward, that General Richardson had been seriously wounded in the attack at Multan. He survived, however, and is still living. It was only sometime after the siege that I learned, through the colonel and the officer who helped to bear the general far away from the battlefield, that this demand as to the ring had really been made, at precisely the moment at which I had heard it in Firozpur.

M. A. Richardson

Through the society's investigation several questions were put to General Richardson; here is the result of this investigation:

1. Does the general remember having said, at the time he was wounded at Multan: "Take this ring from my finger and send it to my wife," or words to that effect?

Very distinctly; I asked this of the commanding officer, Major E. S. Lloyd, who supported me while my servant went to look for help.

2. Can he remember at what time the thing happened? Was it in the morning, the afternoon, or at night?

3. Had the general, before leaving his home, promised or said anything to his wife about sending his ring, in case he should be wounded?

So far as I can remember, I had never had any presentiment on this subject. Naturally, I felt that with a fire such as that to which we were exposed, I might be wounded.

Dear readers, attentive and sincere, let us assert once more that those who doubt these facts are not candid — or are deaf. Let them have the fairness to admit that they are ignorant!

The following story is not less worthy of our attention. Dr. Bruce, of Micanopy (U.S.A.) wrote on

³⁹ "*Phantasms of the Living*," I, 443; *Hallucinations Télépathiques*, p. 144; *Human Personality*, I, 398.

February 17, 1884⁴⁰:

On Thursday, December 27, 1883, I was returning from Gainesville, a dozen miles from here, to my orange-grove, near Micanopy; I had only a little three-room frame house on my plantation, where I spent most of my time at the cultivating season. I was alone, rather tired from of my round on horseback, and had gone to bed very early, probably about six o'clock.

After having slept for some time, I woke up with a feeling of having been purposely lifted up! My first thought was that there was some one in the room. I went into the other rooms similar to mine, and found that the hypothesis of a burglar was inadmissible, for there was nothing there that might have attracted him.

I then went back to bed, and at once I was conscious of an invisible presence, — not exactly that of a living person, but rather a spiritual presence.

The reader will smile at this idea, but I am telling exactly what I felt.

Nevertheless I went back to sleep. Some moments afterward I saw (in a dream) two men engaged in a struggle; one of the two fell, badly wounded, while the other disappeared instantly. The one who had fallen had his throat cut. I did not recognize my brother-in-law in him, for his hands were over his face, and his head was turned toward the left; it seemed to me, however, that he was someone not unknown to me. I looked carefully and saw my wife beside him. She told me that she would not leave until he had been cared for. The wounded man seemed to be lying on an elevated platform, surrounded by chairs, by benches, by desks which recalled a school-room. Outside of this room, I saw a number of people, women for the most part, several of whom seemed known to me. My dream ended there. I awakened again about midnight, got up and went out to observe the weather then went back to bed, without, however, being able to sleep. This dream had made a strong impression on me.

Some days afterward I got a letter from my wife, telling me of her brother's death. The details she gave me of this death corresponded exactly with my dream. Her brother had gone to a marriage festival. He had gone into a bar, and had met there a young man with whom he had a dispute. When he had left the bar, the young man had attacked him and had cut his throat. It was a murder without provocation. My brother-in-law wore an overcoat with the collar turned up; the dagger passed through the counter. He seemed bloodless, as a result of his wound. He had and he did not die until Saturday morning.

My sister-in-law, moreover, had gone to Kentucky. When in bed and asleep on Friday night, the night of her brother's death, she had dreamed that she saw a man with his throat cut, had awakened very much frightened, and had remained in suspense until daylight. Then a telegram announced the death.

The investigation confirmed all these statements.

But it is time to end this chapter.

After all the observations revealed here, it is impossible to doubt the visioning, at a distance, of death-scenes and souls of the dying. These are psychic manifestations in the souls of the living, related, however, to the souls of the dying, functioning at a distance. Invisible ties, little studied so far, bind human beings together. The visible world hides a real world almost entirely uncomprehended. What is still stranger is that at times scenes have been perceived before they were played upon life's stage.

Round and about death there still move many living people. But we shall enter gradually the sphere of the Beyond. Even in the following chapter the activity of invisible beings will seem to manifest itself.

What this chapter teaches, in confirmation of the preceding ones, is that Man does not consist merely of the material body, which statistics take account of, but besides that — and preeminently — of an invisible being able to function beyond the limits of the tangible body. The study of man must be placed upon an entirely new basis, upon the foundations afforded by a knowledge of the psychic.

The sphere of activity of the soul extends far, in time as well as in space. The telepathic, precise visioning, of which we have been spectators, brings us to the door of the temple, closed until now to human investigations. We shall enter it. Warnings of various sorts precede death or announce it; cases of personal prevision of death fix even the day and hour of it. Let us ascertain their truth, let us seek enlightenment, always with the same freedom of mind and without fixed preconceived judgments.

⁴⁰ *Phantasms of the Living*, I, 384; *Human Personality*, I, 413.



VARIOUS WARNINGS PRECEDING OR ANNOUNCING DEATH

*What we know is little,
What we do not know is vast.*
Laplace

We are investigating here, in this second volume, instructive data which may be grouped round and about death, that we may open, as far as possible, the path of research, and may then have before us, for our third volume and our deductions, only the occurrences observed after death itself. Our documents are vast in number and very complex, but let us disdain nothing and investigate all.

Let us continue our methodical classification. Seekers for truth are comparable to seekers for gold in unexplored mines; they must shift many stones of various sorts to detach nuggets of pure gold. These only I should like to offer to my readers. Let us proceed step by step.

The following observations touch upon the sphere of the Beyond. We shall have before our eyes predictions of death on stated dates, and deaths by autosuggestion. We shall skirt an unknown domain; we shall be conscious of the influences of a mysterious world which pervades and envelops us as does the atmosphere. Certain warnings will even seem to us to herald the presence of invisible beings.

We have seen, in the first volume, several accounts of the prediction of deaths without explainable reason, in particular on pages 44, 150, 151, 152, 165, and 167.

We must investigate many others. Before going farther, let us stop to consider a most singular ease of death predicted on a stated day, — a prediction exactly fulfilled. It was related to me in the following curious letter, and merits our attention:

Winterthur, December 23, 1912.

Revered Master:

I wish very much to impart to you, for your most valuable research, a premonitory dream fulfilled exactly. At the time, I was attorney for a large accident-insurance company, with which I am still connected to-day, as a member of the board of directors.

This is what happened to me personally:

The night of Thursday the first to Friday the second of August, 1901, I went, in a dream, into a beer-garden and saw the general manager of our company seated at table on the terrace with a glass of beer before him, which was, in fact, his habit. I went up to him and sat down beside him. He was very pale, and looked as if he were in pain. I asked him if he felt indisposed. "Yes," he answered; "I'm not at all well; besides, on the fifteenth of August there will be a death of importance, and it is I whom it will concern." For your benefit I repeat below in German, word for word, the reply he made to me: "Ja, ich fühle gar nicht wohl; übrigens geht es am 15-August ein grosses Sterben, und das geht mich an."

Thereupon I awakened; it was quarter-past six, the hour at which I usually get up in summer. While dressing, I told my wife of my dream, observing:

"It's strange: the manager is certainly in good health. Yesterday, Thursday, he made a trip to Lindau, on the Lake of Constance, and must have got back last evening."

About half-past seven I went to the office; I waited for the mail, which was late. They brought it to me at last, telling me that the manager had, in fact, come to the office the day before, and had begun to look over the mail, but that, feeling unwell, he had had to stop and go home in a carriage. He did not come back to the office, and died on the following Thursday, on August 15th, about ten o'clock at night, carried off by pericarditis.

I am telling you everything just as it happen to me, without comment, and will merely add that on August 15th my wife had told my dream to our regular physician, who had come to see her that day. Knowing that he was one of the doctors consulted also by my manager, my wife had asked news of him, and had spoken of my dream. The doctor had answered evasively, telling her, however, that the manager was not, relatively speaking, so very ill.

In closing I will add that the general manager, who thus announced in a dream, fifteen days in advance, his early death, treated me, in the office, with the same kindness as he did my colleagues and the other employees, without any special preference for me. So there is, in my opinion, no reason why I, rather than another, should have been chosen to receive this

communication. What shall we conclude? Telepathy? I refrain from passing any judgment.

A. Villinger

(Letter 2291)

We might have included this account in the first volume, in the chapter on the visioning of the future, or that on telepathy: in our investigation everything impinges upon everything else. It fits in better here, however. It would appear that the man who felt himself near his end influenced the narrator's mind. Psychic waves envelop us, as we have already noted.

Plainly, we have a great number of dreams most of which never come true and are meaningless. We must distinguish mental, meaningless dreams from psychic dreams. It is in such cases as the following that the precision is striking: (1) The person affected by the dream is designated; (2) the date of death is stated definitely; (3) the dream coincides with the time when the illness becomes apparent, without, however, the percipient having received any indication by which this illness might be suspected. All these coincidences are too marked not to merit our attention. We should be culpable did we not learn from them. Do we not all feel that there is here a new world to be investigated, an immense psychological world?

With this premonitory visioning the following may be compared:

An account of an imminent death seen in a dream by the doomed man's wife, was given me on September 23, 1900, by the parish priest of Baux-de-Breteuil (Eure): Monsieur l'Abbé Moulin, Master of the Floral Games. The article sent to me was taken from the "Petit Parisien" of that date. Here it is:

During the course of night before last, a tailor, Monsieur Alexandre Drouart, aged twenty-six, living at 67, rue d'Avron, was sleeping quietly in his bed when he was startled into wakefulness by his wife, who, lying beside him, the victim of a terrible nightmare, was uttering despairing cries and veritable lamentations.

The young woman explained to him that in her dream she had just seen him die, after a death-agony of several moments.

"Nonsense, delusions!" the tailor answered. "Calm yourself; you see that I'm well and don't in the least want to die."

After these words he got up to drink a little water, then went back to bed; his wife had already gone to sleep once more.

An hour later, about four o'clock in the morning, Madame Drouart awakened, and soon found that her husband, who seemed to be asleep, was no longer breathing.

Terrified, she called the neighbors, then a physician, Dr. Sussy, who could only state that the young man was dead; he declared that the helpless man's death had occurred about three quarters of an hour before, and was due to heart disease.

A strange coincidence!

Monsieur Deslandes, a police officer, who had been notified at once, gave permission, after having made the customary tests, that the body be buried.

Do not these observations, though less dramatic, remind us of those we related in Volume I, page 77, as to Madame Maricbal and her husband?

My trustworthy correspondent added:

The writer has not yet joined you in penetrating the Unknown; else he would not have seen in this case mere coincidence.

(Letter 951)

In these two examples, death, though announced, was not foreseen by the victim. This is not true in the following case:

A man knew that he was going to die, and told his physician so. His body was worn out, but his mind had remained unimpaired. It was my learned friend Dr. Danjou who related these facts to me, — which he himself observed, in 1912, in Nice:

An invalid attacked by chronic pyelonephritis told me one day (the very day of his death), when I was leaving him for a time: "Don't stay away too long, for I feel it 's the end."

This invalid, more than sixty years old, was in a state of complete physical disintegration which had not altered his

mental faculties in the least. He felt very definitely that he was in full control of his judgment and powers of reasoning, though he knew that the vital forces of his body were affected. His nervous organism was not in the least changed by the illness, which had left the regions of the brain intact. That portion of his body which had been attacked, very far from his brain, had not affected his power of judgment, and one felt in talking to him that his soul, an inmate of a body in anatomopathological disintegration, was absolutely independent of him. I see, in this, confirmation of your convictions, which you asserted so magisterially on pages 31, 37, 38, and 58 of your book, "Before Death." (Does not this case resemble that of Professor Potier, on page 56?)

When I came back, a quarter of an hour afterward, he was dead. And he died with a sudden cry: "I'm going away!"

These observations of Dr. Danjou form a scientific document comparable to any of those we have here investigated.

Here is another, no less remarkable, sent to me from Bari in 1906, published in the "Corriere delle Puglie" of December 17th of that same year. It was written by a priest of Bari, Professor Salvatore Filiori, and has to do with the death of a lawyer, Gaetan Re David, a well-known personage in Les Pouilles.

Scarcely five days ago, I found myself with him at a meeting of the Agricultural Society, of which he was president. Among those present was the young Marquis Arnaldo Cadaleta. Discussion had swung to the evocation of the dead and the spiritualistic experiments that were going on in certain villages of our province. While talking as someone curious but rather indifferent, Monsieur Re David halted, as though struck by an idea, and said to me:

"Listen, Professor, my mother died forty one years ago, and never have I dreamed of her. But last night she appeared to me, and I saw her approach me with open arms; I opened my arms in my turn, and we embraced and kissed each other. This dream gave rise in my mind to the conviction that my mother is summoning me, and that my death is near, very near. What do you say to that, Professor?"

"Dreams!" I answered.

Be that as it may, *three or four days afterward he was dead.* The fact is surprising

This was the visioning of someone dead, in a dream having to do with impending death. It is not rare. We shall again speak of it, farther on (Volume III), in dealing with apparitions of the dead at death-beds of the dying.

Personal previsions of death on stated dates are, also, numerous. I myself know of more than a hundred, apart from the cases given on pages 309, 311, 312, and 314 of our first volume. We shall examine a few of these.

Since we are living, as yet, in total ignorance of the extent of our psychic faculties, it is our duty to observe carefully, without preconceived convictions, all facts which precise documents may furnish for the analysis and knowledge of these faculties.

Madame Frondoni-Lacombe of Lisbon, well known as a writer,⁴¹ told me, in 1911, of the highly extraordinary and absolutely authentic case which follows; she herself gives it:

Dear Master and Friend:

Here in Lisbon, in the Saint-Louis-des-Français Hospital, a sister of Saint Vincent-de-Paul, Sister Marie Souchon, had violent pains in her stomach, and was completely prostrated. The mother superior sent for a physician, Dr. Beira. The latter declared the sister very ill, and, as he was a convinced believer, he thought it his duty to advise the mother superior to have the last sacraments administered as quickly as possible, since a crisis might carry the patient off at any moment.

The mother superior told Sister Marie what the doctor thought, and her confessor, Father Fragues, came without delay. The next day he gave her the last sacraments. It was a Monday.

After the last sacraments had been given, the patient, who was most resigned, asked her companions not to make themselves miserable so soon, and to sleep quietly, for, she asserted, "I can't die until next Saturday."

"How do you know that?" the mother superior asked.

"Through the Holy Virgin," Sister Marie answered. "She just appeared to me and told me so. All my life I have told her of my wish to die on a Saturday, the day sacred to her."

The mother superior believed this an hallucination.

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, up to six o'clock in the evening, there was no aggravation of her condition. It's strange," the sister said. "It's already so late, and the Holy Virgin has not yet come to take me; but she promised to do so, definitely."

⁴¹ Author of the book « *Merveilleux phénomènes de l'au-delà* » (Lisbon, 1920).

“Oh,” said the mother superior, “the Holy Virgin couldn’t take any notice of you: there are so many imploring her aid!”

But all of a sudden the invalid cried:

“No, no! — death is coming! — Feel my feet, they are icy. Yes, I am dying, from my feet to my waist — I am dead. A crucifix, quickly — a Holy Virgin! Pray — pray —”

And she died.

(Letter 2158)

This was a truly strange occurrence. We may think that the dying woman’s idea played the chief part and sufficed to bring on death at the stated time. The premonitory certainty is no less striking on this account. To know on Monday that one is going to die on Saturday is something apart from the attributes of matter and biological mechanism. The mother of Jesus Christ counts for nothing in this instance, but the nun’s mind did count for something; convinced that the Holy Virgin was hearkening to her, was granting her prayer, this good nun kept herself alive until Saturday, by autosuggestion. This is a psychic phenomenon worthy of attention.

In his work “Contribution à l’étude de certaines facultés cérébrales méconnues” Dr. W. de Sermyn tells of an occurrence which he observed in the course of his long career; it is very similar to the preceding one, and still more remarkable. The scientific observation about to be read is, assuredly, most astounding. It was made by a learned physician, an excellent observer, whom my readers already know.⁴² Did only — as the author thinks — cerebral faculties come into play in the following account?

Jean Vitalis was a robust man, — stout, full-blooded, married, without children; in perfect health. He must have been thirty-nine when he was suddenly attacked by a raging fever and by pains in his joints. I was his physician. The symptoms were those of acute articular rheumatism.

The present-day treatment of this disorder, by salicylates, was not yet known. We then used quinine, opium, potassium nitrate, colchicum, diuretic drinks, etc. The disease would drag on for six to seven weeks, and in most cases would result in a cure. Sometimes, however, death would come in consequence of cardiacal or cerebral complications.

I was surprised, the morning of the sixteenth day, to find Jean Vitalis fully dressed, seated on his bed, smiling; he could move his hands and feet quite freely, and no longer had the least fever.

I had left him in a sad state the day before. The joints of his shoulders, his elbows, his hands, his knees, his feet, were swollen and painful. He had had a high fever, and I could not foresee that I was going to find him so active and looking so well.

Very calmly he told me that he attributed his sudden cure to a vision which he had had in the night. He assured me that *his father, who had been dead for some years, had appeared to him.*

This is, approximately, what he said to me:

“My father came to visit me last night. He entered my room by that window which gives on the garden. First he looked at me fixedly from a distance, then drew near me, touched me pretty much all over to take away my pain and my fever, then told me that I was going to die this evening, at exactly nine o’clock. Just as he was leaving he added that he hoped I would prepare myself for death like a good Catholic. I’ve sent for my confessor, who will soon come; I’m going to confess and to take communion, then I’ll have myself given extreme unction. I thank you very much for your good care; my death won’t be caused by any omission on your part. It’s my father who wishes it; he needs me, doubtless; he will come and take me at nine o’clock this evening.”

He said all this very calmly, with a smiling countenance, and an expression of real contentment and happiness lighting up his features.

“You’ve had a dream, an hallucination,” I told him, “and I ‘m astonished that you put faith in it.”

“No, no,” he answered; “I was wide awake; it wasn’t a dream. My father really came; I saw him distinctly, and heard him; he seemed absolutely alive.”

“But the prediction of your death at a fixed time — you don’t believe in it, do you, since you’re cured?”

“My father can’t have deceived me. I’m certain I am going to die this evening, at the time he told me.”

His pulse was full, calm, and regular, his temperature normal. Nothing indicated a patient seriously ill.

Nevertheless, I warned the family that at times death came in cases of cerebral rheumatism, and Dr. R., an old and excellent practising physician, was called into consultation. He came, and made, in the presence of the patient, all sorts of jokes

⁴² *Before Death*, p. 280: His own child seen burned in a stove.

on the subject of his hallucination and of his fancied early death; but out of his hearing, before a family gathering, he said that the brain was affected and that on this account the outlook was gloomy.

“The invalid’s calmness,” he added, “is strange and unusual. His belief in the objectivity of his vision and in his imminent death is surprising. Ordinarily, people fear death, but he doesn’t appear to worry about it; on the contrary, he seems happy and content to die. Still, I can assure you that he does not seem like a man who is going to die this evening; as for fixing beforehand the moment of his death, that’s farcical.”

I went back about noon to see my patient, who interested me keenly. I found him up, pacing up and down with a firm step, without the least sign of weakness or of pain.

“Ah,” he said to me, “I was waiting for you. Now that I have confessed and taken communion, may I eat something? I’m atrociously hungry, but I didn’t want to take anything without your consent.”

As he had not the least fever, and as he gave every evidence of being a man in perfect health, I allowed him to eat a *beefsteak with apples!*

I went back about eight o’clock in the evening. I wished to be with the patient, to see what he would do when nine o’clock came.

He was still gay; he entered into the conversation sanely and in high spirits. All the members of his family were gathered in his room, laughing and talking. His confessor, who was there, told me that he had been obliged to yield to the patient’s repeated pleadings, and that he had just given him extreme unction. “I didn’t wish to oppose him,” he added; “he insisted so! Besides, it’s a sacrament that may be administered several times.”

There was a clock in the room, and Jean, whom I never lost sight of, cast an anxious look in its direction from time to time. When it stood at one minute to nine, and while they were still laughing and talking, he got up from the sofa on which he was sitting, and said quietly:

“The time has come.”

He kissed his wife, his brothers, his sisters, and then he sprang upon his bed, with a great deal of agility. He sat down on it, arranged the pillows, then, like an actor bowing to the public, he bent his head several times, saying, “Good-by, good-by!” He stretched himself out with no haste, and did not stir again.

I went up to him slowly, convinced that he was feigning death. To my great surprise, he had died, with no death-agony or death-rattle, without a sigh: he had died a death such as I had never seen.

We hoped, at first, that it was only a prolonged swoon, a case of catalepsy. The burial was long deferred, but we had to yield to the evidence, — the corpse-like rigidity and the signs of decomposition which set in.

This case, told of by a learned practising physician, after lengthy physiological experience, is still more curious than the first. In all probability, the subject’s father did not really come to warn him of his early end (any more than did the Virgin Mary come in the preceding case), since it is enough for him to have believed it, to have had a subjective impression, to have been convinced of it. This, too, is auto suggestion. Nevertheless, since our subject is to learn complete independence of thought, we cannot help remembering the apparition of a mother, told of not far above, on page 186. Be that as it may, his premonition of the exact moment of death is none the less a fact truly extraordinary and astounding, — above all, with this air of satisfaction, of certainty, and of perfect simplicity. A mental derangement? That is possible, but is not a complete explanation. What sort of derangement? and in what way was he deranged? This explanation would, itself, need to be “explained.” There is in all this a manifestation of uncomprehended psychic faculties.

What interests us here is the prevision, so exact, so precise, of an event to come. Even though it were the conviction of death which led to the event, we should still have to know how he had this conviction, how he perceived his state of health and his final dissolution.

If they had thought of setting the clock back ten to fifteen minutes, he would doubtless have died ten or fifteen minutes later, for he had his eyes fixed on it, and he stretched himself out to die as soon as the hands stood at nine o’clock precisely.

One cannot stop one’s heart at will. Nature has entrusted cardiac movements to nerve centers placed in the lower portions of the encephalon, removed from the direct action of the will. These centers have their own energy, not easily exhausted; they furnish the force necessary for the contractions of the heart, independent of the other organs, even when the latter are seriously affected.

They are like governments of provinces, which, when they have received orders from the head of the nation, continue to carry them out, even after his powers have long since been completely done away with.

Let us be in no haste to draw conclusions as to premonitory apparitions. A psychic world surrounds us, but what is its nature? For Catholics the Holy Virgin has a part in most of the religious occurrences, much oftener than the three unapproachable members of the Trinity, and has assuredly as little connection with them as these last. We have just read of this belief in a part played by Jean Vitalis's father, by Re David's mother, and by the Holy Virgin. Let us take note of these impressions for our general investigation.

In the three accounts which we have just read, a dead mother was connected with the first, a promise by the Virgin Mary with the second, and a dearly loved father with the third. Here is a prediction of the same sort made in the name of — Saint Bridget.

The "Filosofia della Scienza" of Palermo published the following account of death foretold in connection with a superstitious belief, and nevertheless quite impossible to explain as autosuggestion, for death was accidental, though most dramatic. Here is the published letter:

Marianopoli, Caltanissetta, May 20, 1911.

Dear Doctor Calderone:

I spoke to you of an extraordinary case which happened in this parish called by the people a "Miracle of Saint Bridget," for there is the conviction here that the saint's worshipers are accorded the grace, through her, of being warned of their death at least three days beforehand, in order that they may fittingly prepare for it. You then charged me to investigate the details of the narration, and to write them down as best I could. I took the matter up, and can to-day write you what follows:

In October, 1875, at a time when brigandage was rife, an unknown man, decently dressed but of suspicious behavior, was noticed in the environs of Marianopoli, on the Valte-Enferna (Hell Valley) road. A certain Carmela Guercio, still living, was the first to see him, and she ran to the village to report it. The mayor, Baron Pietro Landolina di Rigilifi, sent several guards to the designated spot, who arrested the man and brought him to the village. According to information furnished by him, and by the prefectures of Caltanissetta and Girgenti, he was a certain Rosario Casareto, a native of a parish in the Calabria, who, after personal sorrows, had left the conjugal home, and, wandering over the country-side in an over-excited state, had reached that spot.

While waiting for the necessary letters of identification relative to his case, Casareto was kept in a room on the ground floor which communicated with other rooms occupied by the guards; he was in their charge.

He had between his lips, an object which he claimed was a relic of Saint Bridget; he declared himself her devotee, and told the persons who approached him that he still had three days to live. The next day he took occasion to repeat, a great many times, that two still remained to him, and the following day that there was only one left. This prophecy roused at the time a feeling of pity in all those who heard him, and they believed him mad. At length, after three days, they provided for his transportation from here to Caltanissetta; he was next to be taken to Girgenti.

Mounted guards were ordered to go with him, — Pietro Raso and Salvatore Cali. Just when these guards appeared, to lay hold on Casareto, he cried, "Here are my executioners!" He was then put on a horse which had been saddled by Salvatore Arnone, a Wagoner, and all of them, including Arnone, took the mule-path to Caltanissetta, and went through the "Mimiani" wood. There was in this wood a spring, and at this spring a horse-trough.

The group stopped there to water the horses, and, while they were thus occupied, Casareto's horse gave a bound and ran away at a gallop, a distance of some hundreds of yards. The real reason for the horse's jumping and running away was never known. They thought that Casareto wished to escape, and Rasa, one of the guards, rode after him on his horse; but, on account of inequalities in the ground, this horse fell with its rider, and the latter's musket went off; the shot struck Casareto and killed him. Rasa was sentenced to four years in prison, as guilty of having killed through excess of zeal.

Such are the known facts, related by most of the natives here. I had from Monsieur Salvatore Ferrara, secretary of the local charity organization, confirmation of all the above details; he added that he was present at the moment when the guards appeared to Casareto, and heard the latter's exclamation, "Here are my executioners!" Monsieur Ferrara was then a superintendent of telegraph operators, and his office was situated above the place where Casareto was under guard: at the moment of this exclamation he was leaning on his elbows on the balcony.

I questioned the Wagoner, Arnone, as well, and he, in confirming the story, added another detail not less important: When in the journey from Marianopoli to Caltanissetta, they reached the road (about two kilometers from the horse-trough), Casareto got off his horse, knelt upon the ground, offered up a prayer, then said, "I have still twenty minutes more to live," and mounted his horse again.

The investigation of this singular incident brought to my attention another case of a "Miracle of Saint Bridget."

Such are the facts. Let those competent to do so discuss them and explain them.

Salvatore Rizzo,

Parish secretary.

The attestations are appended.⁴³

What has Saint Bridget to do with the case?⁴⁴ Is it admissible that she really took a hand in these affairs, as did the Virgin Mary in the nun's death, told of above by Madame Lacombe?

We have entered a world that cannot be seen, one difficult to chart. But let us not lose sight of the influence of mind over matter.

I have in my collection accounts of several cases of dead persons appearing to friends to announce their early death, and also announcements of death made by apparitions of unknown persons, with no tie of relationship or friendship. We try, in certain instances, to explain these facts by the theory of accidental dreams which have made a strong impression, or to attribute them to various kinds of autosuggestion; but these explanations seem inadequate in the face of observed facts. Let us consider, among others, the following apparition. Let us read this letter⁴⁵:

Sixty years ago a Mrs. Carleton died in Leitrim County. She was my mother's intimate friend, and a few days after her death she appeared to her in a dream, and told her that she would never again see her thus, save on one occasion which would be twenty-four hours before her death.

In March, 1864, my mother was living with my son-in-law and my daughter, Dr. and Mrs. Lyon, in Dalkey. The evening of March 2nd she went up to her room, in very high spirits, laughing and joking with Mrs. Lyon. That same night, or, rather, the following morning, my son-in-law heard a noise, awakened his wife, and asked her to go and see what was happening. She found my mother half-way out of bed, with an expression of horror stamped upon her features. They soothed her as best they could. The morning of the next day she breakfasted, as was her habit, in bed, and very gaily. In the course of the day she took a bath. Having sent for her granddaughter, she told her that Mrs. Carleton had at last, after an interval of fifty-six years, come to speak to her of her death, which was imminent, and that she would die the morning of the next day, at that same hour. She added that she had, as a precaution, taken a bath to make unnecessary the washing of her dead body. She then began to sink, little by little, and died the morning of March 4th, at the time she had specified.

The doctor and Mrs. Lyon corroborated this account. My mother had always told me that she would again see Mrs. Carleton just before her death.

Thomas James Norris,

Dalkey, Ireland.

Dr. Lyon wrote from Dublin, on August 30, 1883, giving his version:

The late Mrs. Dorcas Norris had told me several times that Mrs. Elisa Carleton had appeared to her in a dream, and had promised to appear to her one last time, twenty-four hours before her death. The night that preceded her death she announced that the warning for which she had waited fifty-six years had been given her, and that she would die on the following night, a thing that happened.

Richard Sir John Lyon

Here we have a person in good health, sure of dying in a few hours, who takes a bath to keep her family from washing her dead body. Can we explain her death?

Three hypotheses present themselves. The first is that the deceased Mrs. Carleton really had an influence on her friend; the second is that the first dream, purely accidental, made so deep an impression on Mrs. Norris that when it occurred again (also by chance) it impressed her with the certainty of her imminent death, which took place by auto suggestion; the third is that the process of organic dissolution had already begun, was natural, and gave rise to the annunciatory dream.

The first hypothesis warrants retention; the two others are more complicated but tenable.

Does not the following example also show that a dead woman may know the date of a death? It is put before us by Browning, the famous English poet, and may be found in "Life and Letters of Robert Browning," by Mrs. Sutherland (page 277)⁴⁶:

⁴³ See "*Annales des Sciences psychiques*," 1911, p. 263.

⁴⁴ Born in 1302; died in Rome in 1373; founder of the Order of the Holy Saviour; author of "*Prophetic Revelations*," which was attacked by Gerson.

⁴⁵ "*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*" V, 291; "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*," 1899, p. 170

⁴⁶ See "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*," 1912, p. 203. Investigation by Bozzano.

In June, 1863, Miss Arabel Barrett (Mrs. Barrett Browning's sister) died of heart disease, and expired in Browning's arms, as had happened seven years before in the case of the latter's wife. That same day Browning told Miss Blodgen the sad news, and informed her of a strange circumstance connected with this death:

"June 19, 1868. — You know I am not superstitious; nevertheless, here is an entry I made in my note-book under the date of July 21, 1863: 'Yesterday, Arabel told me that her mind had been greatly troubled by a dream of the preceding night (Sunday, July 19th). Her sister [Browning's deceased wife] had appeared to her; Arabel had asked: 'When will the day come on which we shall be reunited And the dead woman answered: 'My dear, in five years'; after that Arabel had awakened. In her dream, she had been fully conscious of speaking to someone dead.'"

After five years, lacking a month, the happening came to pass, and Browning wrote: "I had forgotten the date of the dream: I had supposed that not more than three years had gone by, and that therefore, two years were yet wanting for the realization of the prophecy."

How much intensely interesting research has opened up for our investigation We still know nothing positive about all this invisible world, and have undertaken this work in order to reach some conclusion. Unfortunately, instead of three volumes, ten would be necessary.

Premonitory dreams concerning the dead still remain enigmatical to us. Here are two of them, singular enough in their circumstances; they were told me in July, 1920, by Monsieur Vacheron of Nice:

In 1908 my wife dreamed that one of her aunts, who were very devout, had died. She saw her fully clothed, on her bed, with the windows of her apartment lighted up. This aunt died two years afterward, the morning of December 8, 1910. On that same date, in Lyons, there is held the Festival of the Immaculate Conception, and many religious people light candles. The day before, fully conscious, and feeling herself about to die, she requested those of her immediate circle to light candles on the evening of the following day, as usual, even if she were dead. This order was ear out, and it was thus that my wife had seen her aunt.

Second Dream: In June, 1915, we were in Orleans. My wife saw her mother (then aged seventy-nine) in a dream, dead but clothed; parting her garments, she saw a wound on the left side of the stomach, — a purple, blood-colored wound. She was greatly struck by this dream. My mother was living in a little district of Auvergne, in the environs of Clermont. Some days afterward we had very good news from her. We rejoined her in July, and left the village in October.

On January 20, 1916, seven months afterward, I received in Nice, from my daughter, who had remained with my mother, a telegram thus worded: "Grandmother operated on, very ill." The next day another telegram announced her death.

This is what had happened. My mother had a hernia (which we did not know of, for she had spoken of it to no one, and had worn no bandage). This hernia had caused a stoppage. The doctor, summoned in haste, decided that an operation was imperative. They sent for an automobile, and she was taken to a hospital in Clermont. She arrived at night, and was not operated on until the next day. Too late! They took her back toward the village, in an automobile, and she died on the way, in her granddaughter's arms.

My wife's dream was thus realized in all its details a wound in the stomach, on the left side, and my mother clothed, though dead. To see in this a mere coincidence would seem to me fantastic.

(Letter 4212)

This anticipatory visioning is really unbelievable. Nevertheless, it occurs. Here is another case of it.

Monsieur Jean Vetter, a distinguished Swiss architect, a member of the Astronomical Society of France, told me, on June 11, 1920, of the case which follows:

My friend, who is a Christian, a devout Protestant, may have been twenty years old when the following took place:

Between a neighboring family and that of his parents, with whom he was then living, there was a persistent feud due to questions of inheritance. Since each family held to its views, no word passed between them for several years. My friend suffered from this, and often spoke of it in his converse with God. And this is the splendid answer he had, — a vision, upon waking, lasting a quarter of a second, depicting simultaneously the street before their house, several pieces of furniture disposed here and there as though they were moving, and, in the background, a death-bed on which he recognized a second cousin, a near relative of the other family. About six months passed, and my friend was still wondering what his vision might have meant, when one day, several pieces of furniture destined for their home having arrived, he saw them in the street, placed as in his vision. Shortly before he had learned of his second cousin's severe illness, then of his death; he therefore began to watch closely for what might happen. Soon there arrived the different members of the hostile family; they passed between the pieces of furniture to go to the second cousin's home to express the sympathy due from near relatives. My friend took advantage of this moment to express his condolences; these were the first words exchanged between the antagonistic families, which from that time on resumed friendly relations. It must be added that he went to see the dead man, and ascertained that his bed was like the one he had seen in the background.

For my friend, as for me, there is in this an evident proof of a divine influence having produced this vision of the future in order that the only moment when the first conciliatory words might be possible, should not be lost.

(Letter 4158)

Every one must draw his own conclusions. It is difficult to make guesses as to God's love. But, as regards all these psychic observations, it cannot be doubted that we are in the midst of a spiritual world. Did not Saint Paul, before the Athenian Areopagus, quoting Manlius, our poet-astronomer utter this oft-repeated axiom "*In eo vivimus, movemur et sumus*" ("In him we live, move, and have our being")? Nothing is truer. The complexity of the phenomena which we are here investigating proves this, every instant.

The science of the future will analyze our encompassing environment, which we are far from comprehending. All unsuspecting, we are affected by it. It reveals itself, at times, to sensitive beings, in strange ways.

How shall we define, how seek to explain certain indications of the future as to the imminence of death? I owe the account of the following occurrence to a distinguished psychologist, Monsieur de Maratray, whom my readers already know.

One night when Lord Dufferin had accepted, in Ireland, the hospitality of a friend, he awakened suddenly, preyed upon by an indefinable restlessness. He got up, went to the window, which was lighted by the moon, and saw distinctly in the shadow below him a man bearing a large burden on his shoulder. This man was walking slowly. When he passed before the house, it became manifest that he bore a coffin; he lifted his head; his face was so repulsive that Lord Dufferin was greatly struck. His gaze followed the apparition as it drew away, and he went back to bed, where he had great difficulty in going to sleep once more.

The morning of the next day, he questioned his host, but the latter could give him no enlightenment. He knew no one corresponding to the description of the person carrying the coffin, and no burial was awaited in the village.

Some years later Lord Dufferin was appointed Ambassador to France. Determined faithfully to discharge the duties of his high position, he went, one day, to a diplomatic reception that was to be held in the Grand Hotel in Paris. His private secretary conducted him to a large lift before which there were several state officials standing respectfully in line. Lord Dufferin, passing them, bowed, and was about to step into the lift, when he gave an involuntary start. The employee who operated the cable was ugly, surly-looking, and had precisely the features of the mysterious apparition of the Irish village!

Moved by an instinctive impulse, the ambassador drew back; he retraced his steps, uttering some words of excuse, and, on the pretext that he had forgotten something, asked them to take up those who had gone on before, without waiting for him; he then went to the hotel office to make inquiries as to the person who had caused his very natural emotion. But he did not have time. At that moment a terrible crash was heard, mingled with cries of anguish. The lift, reaching a certain height, had dropped suddenly to the bottom of the shaft, crushing or mutilating those within it.

The accident is historic, and its precise date could be easily verified. The mysterious employee was killed with those whom he was taking up. His origin could not be traced. He was, it was said, an extra helper, a substitute, a vagrant whom they had temporarily engaged. Lord Dufferin never knew any more about it, and he vainly sought to explain by what sorcery the hand of Destiny had saved him from peril by lifting, in so mysterious a way, a corner of the veil that is over that part of eternity which we call the future.

July 18, 1920

R de Maratray.

(Letter 4236)

This fantastic adventure was an actual happening. Lord Dufferin was a relative of Madame de Maratray, and the family was kept informed of its course. Warnings of this sort are certainly most strange! They prove to us the existence of the unknown world, the mysteries of which we hope to penetrate.

My readers were not surprised that a man might have been seen in a place where he was not, — a man destined to be found again in a situation so full of meaning. They have skimmed the surface of the mysteries of space and time, without having been able to fathom them. They know, for example, that we *now* observe telescopically and photograph, in the sky, happenings which *took place* thousands of years ago, — as I was doing just a few nights ago when I scrutinized the massing of stars which gives luster to the constellation of Hercules; light from them takes a hundred thousand years to reach us. We who now observe this starry formation are the future for the picture we gaze on, — with a difference of a thousand centuries! We even take pictures of stars which no longer exist, which have been stricken from the life of the skies.

What is the present? What is the future? Certain annunciatory previsions are at times as strange as they are

menacing. The one which follows is of this sort.

My erudite friend Mademoiselle Dudley, of the Comédie-Française, has given these details as to the sad end of Mademoiselle Irene Muza, a young actress who was burned to death in the course of the winter of 1909⁴⁷:

She was a convinced spiritualist; and several months beforehand, during a séance in which she was in a deep hypnotic sleep, they asked her if she saw what awaited her, personally, in the future. She wrote the following words: "My career will be short; I dare not say what my end will be: it will be terrible!" The experimenters, much impressed, erased the words before she awakened; thus, consciously at least, she never knew what a terrible thing she had predicted for herself.

Several months afterward her hair-dresser was sprinkling her hair with an antiseptic lotion made of mineral essences, when she let several drops of the liquid fall on a lighted stove. These instantly flamed up; fire enveloped the hair and clothing of the actress, who in a second was wrapped in flames, and suffered such burns that she died at the hospital a few hours later.

Bozzano observes in this connection:

It is premonitions of this sort which, collected and arranged in large numbers, would lead us to infer the existence of something like a "fatality" ruling human destinies in mysterious fashion; that is, unless we wish, with regard to this episode, to bring forward the hypothesis of "reincarnation"; according to this, the spirit itself might have freely predetermined this terrible end, as an expiation or a test.

Lord Dufferin's experience shows us, however, that these portents do not always prove fatal. His vision was symbolic; but by what unknown force could he have escaped? The following is an incident of a rather worldly nature.

A singular enough premonitory dream was told me in a letter dated April 23, 1899, by a correspondent really astounded by its realization:

The night before my young brother died, I had a veritable nightmare. I was in my parish church; it was crowded; I saw a priest whom my brother knew; he was walking in the midst of the crowd; then I saw a lady who came toward me with an air of fury and said to me: "You think you 're beautiful in your dress," — a dress which did, in fact, please me (I had just had it made, and had worn it only a few times). She went on, "You won't wear it for long!" Startled, I woke up. In the morning, my brother fell to the ground with a stroke of apoplexy, and he died in the evening at eight o'clock.

(Letter 624)

What a singular form of warning! People have no idea of the variety of these premonitions. The following one is not less surprising. It is slightly reminiscent of Lord Dufferin's.

A man recognized himself in a corpse, and died some days afterward. This story was related by a priest of Brittany, Monsieur Jules Pachen, in the "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*."⁴⁸

In the Department of Finistère, the parish rector, after leaving high mass, went to the vicarage, carrying a silver-gilt chalice, and went up to his room to leave it there. In going down into the dining-room, in a corner at the bend of the stairway he was obliged to make room for a corpse which was being brought down from the first floor. He recognized himself in this corpse! The prey of intense emotion, he entered the dining-room, where he found his vicar. The latter, struck by the pallor of his face, said to him, "Are you ill?" — "No, no; but this is what has just happened to me." He told of the incident; the vicar was skeptical. The other held to what he was sure of having seen, and as a means of verification added, "I shall be carried down from my room by So-and-so and So-and-so." He named four priests of the neighboring parishes.

After vespers the priest put his spiritual and temporal affairs in order. He fell ill; in a few days he was dead.

The vicar announced his death. The priests of the neighboring parishes came, as was the custom, to discharge their last duties to their deceased colleague. The four priests designated by the deceased came forward, of their own free will, to take the body down into the dining-room, transformed into a chapel, where tapers were to be burned about the coffin.

The priest's premonitory vision was thus realized. This happened about fifteen years ago. The occurrence is known to the priests of Quimper.

In writing this chapter, it seems to me appropriate to publish here the following letter (received in April, 1899) from an enlightened correspondent of long experience. We are still in Brittany.

Inter-portents: Though I myself have not been a witness of the phenomena which you have undertaken to study analytically, I think it no less than my duty to bring to your attention the following experiences of persons of my acquaintance, whose perfect good faith could not be doubted in any respect whatsoever, and who have declared

⁴⁷ See "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*," 1912, p. 306.

⁴⁸ December, 1906, p. 733.

themselves ready to confirm these accounts in detail, over their signatures.

Manifestations, apparitions, presentiments, etc., have in all times been of frequent occurrence in Brittany. They are called *inter-portents*. Monsieur le Bras, professor of history in the Quimper Lyceum, has published numerous examples of them.

Here is, in a few words, a description of each of the inter-portents fulfilling the requirements of your investigation; they were told me *directly* by the persons concerned, and I consider them absolutely authentic:

1) A terrific noise was heard during the night, at the same moment, by two women living alone, one of whose rooms was placed directly over the other, — a noise like the falling of their own home. The husband of one of these two neighbors was a sailor on a merchant vessel, on its way to a foreign country. This manifestation coincided with his death.

2) A similar manifestation took place at the home of a widow, also living in Paimpol. This inter-portent was the precursor of the death of one of her nieces, who lived in Paris, — a death of which she learned two days afterward.

(3) Similarly, it was by an inter-portent that the widow in question learned, before having been otherwise informed of it, of the death of her little daughter, who died in Paris. This child had, after her mother's death, been left with one of her aunts in Tréguier. The manifestation took the form of violent shakings, during the night, of the door-handle of the room in which the widow was lying.

(4) A seraphic chant heard simultaneously, during the night, by two persons, mother and daughter, who were lying in the same room, but each in a separate bed. The mother noted the day of the month on which this manifestation took place. She was in this way able to ascertain later that it happened on the very day of the death of one of her relatives, a missionary martyred in China.

(5) An apparition: A captain, on a long voyage, appeared in the course of the night to his wife, walking up and down the room in which she was lying, not yet asleep. The day before, this captain had set sail for Ireland. Three months later it was learned that on the very night on which he had appeared to his wife the vessel under his command had been run into by an English ship. This accident at sea cost the lives of all those aboard the French vessel.

I might have added to the manifestation related above, some cases of inter-portents having to do not with the living but with persons in good health, whose deaths, occurring shortly afterward, seem to have been announced in this way.

J. Galobert,

Navy Commissioner in retirement in Paimpol

(Letter 581)

We shall make, later (in Chapter IX), a special study of sounds, movements, and the striking of blows connected, indubitably, with deaths.

The letter just read is in some respects an abridged version of our collected observations. Brittany has no monopoly of them, though more careful note is there taken of them. Perhaps the natives of Brittany are by temperament more sensitive to them. Has not Cæsar already spoken of this in his "Gallic Wars"?

The experience related below is, perhaps, still more fantastic than the preceding ones, and we should not believe it if it had not brought about the conversion of a man fundamentally skeptical, who called all psychics "idiots" and "befuddlers." The hero of this story is a Monsieur Pyrrhus Bessi, well known in Sicily. He himself wrote the following account⁴⁹:

Last year (1899), in the month of December, at a reunion of my wife's family one evening we were talking gaily, gathered around a good fire on the great hearth, when we heard, suddenly, a terrific noise, as though a gun had been fired close to our ears!

After our first moment of surprise, we sought to explain the occurrence by first finding out whether it was not a practical joke, or something more serious. One of us went up to the attic; as for me, I went down to inspect the cellar. Nothing! We then examined the guns: they were still loaded.

When we got back to the kitchen, we still smelled the same very marked odor of burnt powder, — to such an extent that we had to open the window.

I admit that I was astounded. I was all the more so when I noted that my relatives' attitude denoted depression rather than surprise.

After a moment of profound silence, I asked them what the matter was. My father-in-law said with a melancholy sigh:

⁴⁹ "Revue des Etudes Psychiques," by César de Vesme, 1901, p. 27.

“At last you’ll believe.”

I did not answer.

“My dear boy,” he added, “that report is a bad omen!” “Come, come!” I replied. “Superstitions!” He shrugged his shoulders, a little annoyed. But, when a moment had passed, he went on:

“Superstitions? I speak from experience, from painful experience. You must know that this isn’t the first time this has happened, and it’s always been followed by a misfortune in our home. Eight days before my poor sister died we heard the same report. Do you remember it?” he asked, addressing his wife and the old maid-servant.

The two women answered in the affirmative, with gestures of sadness.

“And, besides that, fifteen days before the death of my first son we had this same warning.”

I could not yet have entire faith in these words; still, I felt disturbed.

Once more, heavy silence reigned in the room. But it was soon broken by the ringing of a bell.

I myself went to open the door. It was my father-in-law’s first cousin, a well-to-do landed proprietor who lived in the farthest quarter of the town.

He entered, without even troubling to say good day. He had an air of sadness and consternation.

These are the first words which he spoke:

“Didn’t you hear anything?”

All of us, I included, answered at once, hardly giving him time to finish his question:

“You heard it, too, then?”

“Yes, the loud firing off of a gun. We were eating supper.”

The short account which he gave us increased my astonishment greatly. This strange coincidence of two identical and simultaneous incidents made me reflect. Nevertheless, I would not yet admit that “spirits” were concerned in it.

On the following days nothing more was said of the matter. Two weeks went by in this way.

One evening I was alone, writing. Fatigued with work, I halted, lit a cigarette, and stretched myself out in an arm-chair. Before me, in an old mirror, were reflected the bluish coils of the smoke; I was amusing myself by sending it into space.

The cigarette was half consumed when I perceived that the flame of my lamp was sinking. I wished to snuff it, but the wick went out suddenly.

I was greatly astonished to see that despite this the room was still irradiated by a faint grayish light.

Glancing, by chance, toward the mirror, I saw that it reflected a light more vivid than a moment before; in it could be seen a room rather brightly illuminated, with furniture that was different from mine. One would have said that, instead of the mirror, there was an opening through which another room of the house could be perceived. I thought I must be dreaming; nevertheless, I remained motionless, astounded by this scene.

I then saw an old lady come forward; I recognized her as my father-in-law’s aunt, the mother of the cousin who had come to our house during that memorable evening when the sinister report of a gun had been heard.

The old lady sat down at a table, took some sheets of paper from a drawer, and began to write slowly, with an air of great absorption, but with great care, without once lifting her head. She then enclosed the written sheet in an envelop, which she put into the drawer. Then she leaned her head against the back of the arm-chair, and seemed to fall asleep.

I gazed without even moving a muscle of my face, but a cold sweat made me shiver. However, I could not take my eyes from the mirror.

But the light that was mysteriously reflected in it grew fainter gradually, as though the invisible lamp which illuminated the room in which the old lady was sleeping were going out; and it was not long before the darkness grew as intense in the mirror as in my study.

This left me, for a long time, the prey of a veritable terror. I wished to rise, to shake off this painful state of mind; but I neither could nor dared.

I cannot say how long I remained thus, in darkness. The dawn would probably have surprised me in the arm-chair, if my wife, seeing that I delayed so long in going to bed, had not come to look for me.

You will say that we are here concerned with a simple phenomenon of hallucination. Well, I thought this when the next day I awoke from a short, troubled sleep.

But some moments afterward I was told that the old lady whom I had seen in the mirror had been found dead, in the course of that very night, in the arm-chair in which it had seemed to me that she had gone to sleep, and that her will, written wholly by herself, had been found in the drawer of the table!

Pirro Bessi.

The writer Bessi was then living in Cefalu, in the pro Vince of Palermo. It was at Panicale that the incidents in question took place. Panicale is a community of four thousand inhabitants, in the province of Perugia. The various persons, who, together with Monsieur Bessi, were the witnesses of this occurrence, wished to vouch for its truth in the following document:

Panicale, April 17, 1901.

The undersigned — the wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law respectively of Professor Pirro Bessi of Cortone, and his father-in-law's cousin — consider it their duty to declare that the account given by their relative is perfectly exact, as regards the report of a gun heard simultaneously in the dwelling of the first four persons undersigned and in the dwelling of the fifth, although the two houses are on opposite sides of the district.

They consider it pertinent to add that they heard, on other occasions as well, and always simultaneously in the two houses, noises like the firing of a gun, and that this was always a sign foretelling the death of some relative, which was not long in coming.

Louise Bessi, Née Landi.
Ange Landi.
Adélaïde Landi.
César Landi.
François Bastianelli.

We may remark, as did C. de Vesme, that the scene perceived in the mirror did not really take place there; no one with good sense can doubt this. The bright surface aids in bringing the subject into a state of semi-hypnosis, in which he sees all these things very much as he sees them in an ordinary dream. It is, in some degree, a waking dream.

One may well imagine that this double experience — reports of a gun at the time of a death, and the visioning of the person about to die, at the moment she was writing her will — changed the witness's incredulity into a conviction of the reality of these facts, however inexplicable they be. Vision at a distance is today well enough known. But the report of a gun that was heard without the gun having been fired by any one, is still more enigmatical, — although incontestable.

When we ourselves come into contact with occult physics, we can no longer deny; we are convinced of what we have seen and heard.

All this seems as absurd to us as it is unbelievable. But how can we refuse to admit the truth of observations a hundred times attested? The tragic death of Irene Muza the actress was foretold to her in a state of hypnosis; that of the priest of Brittany was seen by himself, etc. Can we put in this category the death of King Ludwig II of Bavaria (1886), struggling with his physician in the lake near his palace? With regard to this struggle in the lake, Charles du Prel has made known the following facts:

Some days before Dr. von Gudden's departure for Hohen schwangau to be with Ludwig II, whose transference to the castle of Berg was not yet decided upon, the doctor came to breakfast in an ill humor, and told his wife that the whole night long he had been tormented by a dream in which he had struggled with a man in the water. Later on, the doctor's widow told this dream to the deputation from the Munich Anthropologic Society, on the occasion of her receiving condolences from the members of the society. I had the story from one of the witnesses.⁵⁰

It is plain enough, Du Prel observed, that Dr. von Gudden had, in a dream, a very distinct vision; the strong impression it left made it possible for him to remember it after he awoke. But the king's person faded into that of any man.

On a trip to Munich (1906) I had occasion to visit the Lake of Starnberg, where this dramatic drowning took place. The spot is not deep, and is near the bank, and it would seem that there was in this case a singular act of aberration on the part of the king, who had, moreover, been virtually insane for some time.

Let us investigate everything. Let us seek. How shall we interpret the really extraordinary warning an account of which follows? It is a symbolic, supernormal warning of an accident, in the form of a bizarre dream

⁵⁰ See *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, 1912, p. 300.

related by Monsieur Bozzano⁵¹:

The observer and the narrator was a certain Mr. Brighten, known to Mr. Podmore, who describes him as an intelligent, perspicacious man, practical and well-balanced. He tells us that in 1861 one of his friends, Mr. James Clareckburn, having acquired a steamboat for river navigation, asked him to go on an excursion with him. They left Norwich, and after their first day's trip on the river stopped for the night at Yarmouth, a short distance from the mouth of the river; they attached the boat to a near-by vessel, by means of cords fastened to the bow and the stern. After that, at about half-past nine, they withdrew into their respective cabins. Mr. Brighten writes:

I may have slept for some hours when my dream began. I fancied that I opened my eyes and that I saw, through the ceiling of the cabin, two shadowy phantoms hovering in the air near the funnel! They seemed absorbed in lively conversation, and pointed now to the mouth of the river, now to the rows which held the vessel. At length they separated, gesticulating and winking as though they had agreed upon a plan of action. Still suspended in the air, one of them went to the bow and the other to the stern, both holding their forefingers extended, with which they touched the ropes, simultaneously; these flamed as though they had been touched by hot irons. The vessel, unattached, was borne along, drifting; it passed beneath the suspension bridge, then the other iron bridge, passed by Braidon, the Yarmouth bridge, and the long line of boats which had cast anchor in this spot. All this time the two phantoms, still hovering in the air above the boat, emitted strange musical sounds. I wished to wake my companion because I well knew that, if the current carried us to the mouth of the river, we should inevitably be wrecked as we passed through the rocks; and in the dream I strove to shake off the incubus which oppressed me, but in vain. We still went on; my eyes discerned every object in our course; we passed Southdown, then the village of Gorleston, and at length we reached the last curve of the river, where the water rushes precipitately over the rocks and mingles with the sea. In a short time we were borne on by these whirlpools, and I saw that the boat was beginning to sink. The musical sounds emitted by the two phantoms then changed to terrifying howls of triumph. The water reached my chin; there was a rattling in my throat; I was drowning.

This was my dream, — or, rather, my nightmare, — which awakened me violently. I leaped from my bunk and went toward the door, which I broke down with one blow. I found myself awake, in my night-clothes, beneath a serene, moonlit night sky. Instinctively I looked toward the rope at the stern, and saw with terror that just at that moment it had broken. I turned toward the hook on the near-by ship, close to our bow, and saw beside me my companion, who had come running at the sound of the shattered door, and was telling me of the other rope, which was gone. We both clung desperately to the hooks with our hands, heedless of our skin, which was bleeding, and we called for help. Men from the near-by vessel came without delay, in time to get new ropes for us. The danger past, my friend began to reproach me for having broken the door. I answered by telling him of the occurrence, which had left me still greatly agitated. On the following morning, in thinking calmly of what had happened, I was able to convince myself that if, at the moment when the ropes had parted, we had continued to sleep, the drama of my dream would have been inexorably realized in all its details.

William B. Brighten.

Mr. J. W. Clareckburn, the narrator's companion in ad venture, confirmed this story.⁵²

Myers made the following reflection on the subject:

Mr. Brighten was informed in some way of the danger he was running, which no normal faculty of his spirit could have revealed to him. Is this clairvoyance? Is it the manifestation of an uncomprehended intelligence, incarnate or disembodied? I feel that I would not be sincere if I should let it be thought that we are in possession of the explanation.

To interpret this fantastic warning is, indeed, extremely difficult. Other observations leave us in the same predicament.

That the diabolical phantoms seen in this nightmare were there, we cannot so easily admit. But what actually was there? As a contrast to it the result was an effective protection, — a rescue.

Invisible forces, and even invisible beings, are about us; this subject will be especially investigated farther on. Let us not change our course. We are advancing slowly but surely along a road which we ourselves are marking out and building, on brush-covered ground, almost all of which has to be cleared.

Do we not note from time to time, in the course of human events — speaking generally or in particular — certain occurrences, at once unforeseen and logical, which would seem to indicate the existence of an inherent justice? Is it for bidden to admit the influence of invisible beings, who direct affairs? The ant does not see the foot that crushes it. Microbes govern our health without our seeing them.

The mind of terrestrial man is not supreme in the universal hierarchy. There are intellectual beings superior to him, just as there are in the sky superior worlds to that on which we dwell. There may be, on our own planet, in

⁵¹ *Annales des Sciences psychiques*, Sept., 1907.

⁵² See *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, VIII, 401.

visible beings whose worth greatly surpasses ours. These beings may perceive our actions. Their seeing them would not keep us from acting freely. You know what your dog will do under certain given conditions; but it is not your knowledge of this that will make him act in that way; one may admit that a being as superior to man as an intelligent man is superior to his dog, might know how man will make use of his remnant of free choice. Without returning to what we said as to the visioning of the future and of liberty⁵³, we may suppose that beings superior to us see the future as though it were the present.

Our research will lead us gradually to revelatory investigations.

There are warnings the origin of which is truly enigmatical. To give one example in a hundred, Victorien Sardou told me that when he was one day following the rue de la Banque, a voice in him cried, "Cross over!" He obeyed, and immediately afterward a stone, loosened from a cornice, fell upon the sidewalk over which he was about to pass. This must be classed with the command given the young girl in her bath. (Volume I, page 90.)

The warnings of a psychic nature with which this chapter is concerned, have been known since the earliest times, but have not been sufficiently understood up to the present. To give only the most celebrated example, the famous "demon of Socrates" represents one of these phenomena. We have read of it in the works of all the authors, in all the commentaries, from Plato, Xenophon, and Plutarch to Lelut. We see in its case precise predictions which cannot be attributed to chance. It was caused either by a dissociation of Socrates's personality, or by an external spirit. Assuredly, the difficulty of explanation is serious. Lelut, professor at the Sorbonne, a rather famous member of the Institute, extricated himself a bit thoughtlessly by declaring, simply, that the wise Socrates was mad! This is no explanation at all, though this interpretation has been the official, standard theory for sixty years. The old hypothesis of an auditory hallucination does not explain everything; the recent discovery of the subconscious is ingenious, but is not a universal solution.

As a matter of fact, the personal previsions of death related in this chapter, — above all, those of Jean Vitalis and of Casareto, the case of Bessi, that of Brighten, etc., — gradually reveal to us an invisible world wholly unexplored.

With regard to all the phenomena which we have presented so far, we have remained in the world of the living. It was with that world, in fact, that our general synthesis had to begin. These observations antedate terrestrial death. We here reach the frontier of the other world. We shall be witnesses of the direct functioning of the soul at the moment of death, whether it be mentally, without physical phenomena, or materially; we shall render complete, by means of new facts proved with certainty, the documents revealed in the pages which we have read. These transmissions are often astounding, are illustrated by fantastic visionings — still more strange, at times, than the preceding ones — and are, no less than the others, absolutely indubitable.

⁵³ *Before Death*, pp. 94 and 264



MENTAL IMPRESSIONS OF DEATH OR ACCIDENTS AT A DISTANCE (WITHOUT PHYSICAL PHENOMENA)

*He felt himself under the solemn influences of nature:
a vast and infinite magnetism which is the life of
creation and joins the atom to the universe.*

Bulwer Lytton — Tatoní.

The warnings preceding or announcing death which have just passed before our eyes have brought us face to face with the physiological and psychological phenomena of death. We shall make a special investigation of the psychic phenomena. There is such great diversity in the circumstances connected with the cessation of material life that we must now less than ever deviate from the principles of a rigorous scientific method; we must put our observations into distinct categories, that we may better discuss them. The greatest clearness, the most careful division of labor, the most painstaking classification is necessary. We may hope to lay, in this way, the foundations of the new science.

Certain manifestations of the dying and the dead will in the next chapters be shown as characterized by unexplained noises, by the striking of blows here and there, by the shifting about of objects, by material occurrences affecting the senses of observers, or giving them that impression. We have already, more than once, encountered this sort of manifestations. As to the fundamental distinctions of which we are speaking, this present chapter will be exclusively given over to sensations experienced by our minds, *without the accompaniment of physical phenomena: mental sensations*. They have their own importance.

Let us collect these proofs, which are much more numerous than is believed, but which remain generally unknown.

As I have remarked a hundred times, the greater part of psychic phenomena remain ignored, hidden, — are useless for our anthropological studies. A painter, a capital fellow, whom I have known for more than twenty years, told me yesterday, while I was working on this chapter, that when he was walking one day in the Bois de Boulogne, flirting with a jolly little actress, and they were talking of rather flippant things, she had halted suddenly, exclaiming: “Oh, how sad I feel! What’s happening to me?” And she began to weep.

This was what had happened: at that very hour her father was dying, far away, in the country.

“Why did you never tell me of this?” I asked my friend.

“Because it wasn’t worth while. It was mere chance! And then — it’s contrary to religion.”

It is not contrary to religion, according to him, to amuse oneself with actresses, but it is contrary to religion to busy oneself with the human soul.

It is, however, just such commonplace reasons which have until now kept the metaphysical sciences from progressing. People judge superficially; they are content to think there is only chance in these telepathic coincidences.

Up to the present how difficult it has been to investigate these facts! In general they are not spoken of; they are denied, are hidden; for one reason or another they are kept out of sight. To give one example out of a thousand: readers have had an opportunity to see, in “L’Inconnu” (page 181) the touching story of a child who went in spirit to kiss his mother, at the moment of his death, and to console her. When I wished to ask the narrator about this vision, which might have been attributed to a hallucination, I received the following reply:

In spite of my great desire to satisfy you, by asking my aunt to give you, herself, an account of the occurrence of which I have told you, I cannot do it. My aunt has wished always to keep this memory of her son for herself alone, thinking, perhaps, that she would profane it if she spoke of it to strangers, and she has never mentioned it except to her family. These poor parents think with joy of this last good-by of their son.

I do not wish to tell her that I have committed this slight in discretion in your favor, since I did it only to give you one more example to add to all those, so convincing, that you have already given. Certainly, there was no hallucination or illusion.

My uncle and my aunt were absolutely incredulous as to all these questions. When they were told stories of this sort, they laughed, and might easily have called mad those who told them; they now laugh at those who do not believe these things, and this memory is always a very sweet emotion to them, for they are persuaded that their dear son did not wish to leave them without saying good-by.

Thus, the occurrence was accepted as real, incontestable, but — it must not be spoken of!

Let us thrust obstacles aside, and push forward.

We shall give this chapter over to mental impressions at a *distance*. All accounts which we are about to read have to do with definite observations.

I owe to a most learned man — an independent seeker and a courageous experimenter — the following curious narration:

In 1879 I was pupil in Stanstead College, at about 130 kilometers from Montreal.

The principal of the college was at that time the Rev. A. Lee Holmes, a man of great stature, long-bearded, his manner patriarchal; he was good and just and, in consequence, greatly beloved of all the masters and pupils. I had a companionable room-mate, named Charles. I was still very young, very devout; my faith was, perhaps, ingenuous, but it was sincere and limitless. I had never heard theosophy, occultism, or spiritualism spoken of; the very words themselves were unknown to me.

One day — it was a Sunday morning — I was in the grip of an indefinable restlessness. I had, however, no reason for sadness; I was in good health, had only friends, and stood well in almost all my classes. My roommate tried to cheer me by all possible means, but in vain; this melancholy grew intense, and took possession of my whole being.

When, at midday, the bell rang for luncheon, I went down to the dining hall and took my place at the table, but I could not eat; I was weighed down by a sadness which clutched at my heart. About three o'clock in the afternoon I felt an irresistible need of being alone. I asked my roommate to be so good as to leave; he consented; I locked the door, that I might not be disturbed. I sat down at my little writing-table, meditative; my head in my hands, I tried to account for my condition, to find a reason for this unaccustomed sadness. Suddenly I experienced something resembling a slight torpor, and I had the sensation of flying through space with the rapidity of thought; but it was so dark that I saw nothing distinctly, and I can only compare this phenomenon to the changes of scenery which are sometimes effected in a theater, when all the lights are out and the curtain has not been lowered. Then I found myself in a room. At first I distinguished only the four walls; then objects appeared vaguely, and, little by little, grew clearer and more distinct.

It was a bedroom; on a bed was lying a woman who seemed very ill; beside the bed another woman was standing, looking at the sick woman attentively; at the foot of the bed another woman was sobbing; I could not see her face, but recognized her all the same; in the opposite corner was a table at which a man was sitting, pen in hand; on the table was an inkstand and paper.

I recognized all these persons: the ill woman was my mother, the two women were my sisters, and the man my brother Adolphe. I then heard Adolphe say to Mother, "What must we write him?" and Mother answered, "Write him that the doctor has said I haven't long to live, and that if he wishes to see me alive, he must come at once." I understood that they were talking of me, and that this letter was destined for me. Suddenly I again had the feeling of a rapid change of scene, in darkness, and I found myself back in my room. A great anxiety then mingled with my sadness; I longed to get this letter, which I knew had been written; but it could not leave Montreal before Monday, and, in consequence, I could not receive it until Tuesday morning.

I got through Monday as best I could; Tuesday morning came. It was the principal's habit to distribute the mail after breakfast, toward seven o'clock. Too impatient to wait for the end of the meal and until prayers were over, I went to Mr. Holmes to ask him to have the kindness to give me my letter. "What letter?" he demanded. "A letter I'm expecting from Montreal this morning," I answered. "Go and sit down in your place, and wait for your turn, like the others," he said. At last I got this letter I had waited for so impatiently; it contained little else than the words which I had seen the evening before the last. When I touched this letter, some thing strange happened within me: a sudden and inexplicable joy took the place of sadness; I grew suddenly happy, but without knowing why. I showed the letter to the principal, who said to me: "I will allow you a holiday, and you may go this very morning; there is a train which leaves about noon. Go and get ready."

It then came into my mind that Mother was better, and that this was the cause of the inner joy which I felt. So I told Mr. Holmes that I would not leave that day that I should wait. "What!" he cried, "you won't leave today? But if you put off your departure until tomorrow, your mother will, perhaps, be dead when you arrive. If you need money," he added, "I'll lend you some, and I'll also lend you a nice large cloak, to wrap yourself up in warmly." (For it was winter and very cold.) "I thank you very much," I answered, "but I don't want to go today, for I believe that an unexpected change has taken place, and that Mother is much better." — "But what do you know about it?" he answered. After a moment of confusion I answered: "I don't know, but just as I learned that that letter would arrive this morning, containing what it does contain, I feel that Mother is now out of danger."

"What sort of old woman's tale are you telling me? Take care, sir," he added in severe tones: "when one yields to such

idle fancies one loses faith quickly.” He reprimanded me severely, made me promise never to speak of this incident to the other pupils, and to forget it completely.⁵⁴

The next day I actually received a letter from my brother, informing me that during the night an unexpected improvement had taken place in our Mother’s condition, and that she was now quite out of danger.

I kept my word: I spoke of this to no one, and I should, perhaps, have forgotten it, if I had not later had other experiences of the same sort. I must also add, with regret, that at this time, I attached so little importance to these proofs that I destroyed, with many others, the two letters mentioned above. *But these facts are yours.*

Ernest de Sasseville

My readers are now fairly well advanced in the knowledge of these phenomena of vision at a distance, and the preceding chapters have put enough examples before their eyes for them not to be surprised by these new observations. I am giving them here, not for the sake of demonstrating vision at a distance — for it would teach them nothing new as to this — but for the phenomenon of an *inner sensation of the soul*: we are going farther and farther into the psychic world.

The story of this occurrence was sent me from Canada. Here is another of quite the same sort, sent me from the United States.

We are here concerned with a transference of thought over a distance, at the moment of a mother’s death, from her daughter in Mexico to her daughter in New York. I received the following letter after the publication of “L’Inconnu”:

My mother died on November 18, 1889, eight months ago. She had fallen ill with pneumonia, on the first of the month. We were living in Mexico. My sister, who is the wife of the president of the International Bank, in New York, and who is living in that city, could not come, she herself being unwell. As her father in-law was president of the Union Cables Company, I had been allowed to send as many messages a day as I thought necessary to keep my poor sister informed as to our mother’s illness. I sent two cables a day from November first to the seventeenth. That day I sent one which read, “Mother very low, but doctor has not lost hope.” There was no reason to think her worse. On the eighteenth, at ten o’clock, my dear mother breathed her last, and my grief was so poignant that I did not think of letting my sister know. I did not do so until the next day. She then wrote me, asking me to state the exact day and hour of the death; she told me that, not having got any news on the eighteenth, she had believed Mother better. She told me, however, that she had suddenly been seized with a nervous trembling and had begun to weep, and when the servants had asked her what was the matter, she had answered, “My mother is dead; I hear my sister’s cries.” Raising her eyes to the clock, she had seen that it was ten o’clock. At that hour I was on my knees, weeping, my head upon a chair, listening to my mother’s last breaths, and realizing that all was over. I uttered a cry, so terrible that they thought I had gone mad.

Allow me to tell you, dear Master, that your book soothes my very soul, for I now know that when I felt my mother’s hand caress me, some months after her death, it was not a dream! She was really there, near me, who loved her so.

Forgive this letter, Monsieur Flammarion, but I feel comforted since I have told you my thoughts, and I dare to hope for some lines from you, giving me more enlightenment as to my experience.

Last week, I was in bed, with a great restlessness at my heart. The physician had found me with your book in hand, and had forbidden me to read it, saying that my nerves were already too highly strung, too much on edge; but I was able to convince him that the book acted, on the contrary, as a sedative and not as an excitant. For my part, I thank you with all my heart for having written it, and I beg you to believe that in this distant country, exiled afar from lovely Prance, which I adore, you have a most humble but fervent admirer.

Georgina Bernstein

Mexico, July 31, 1900.

(Letter 932)

In this account, so honest and so sincere, we feel with certainty that there was telepathic transmission between Mrs. Bernstein and her sister, from Mexico to New York, at the moment of their mother’s death, and that the mother’s affection for her daughters was connected with this transmission.

These mental impressions, at a distance, of the deaths or illnesses of loved ones, have been told of in every country. The two preceding communications were sent me from Canada and the United States. Here is another received from Asiatic Turkey:

⁵⁴ We understand all these reflections of the principal, expressed to his pupil.

Knowing that you gather, as precious, everything relating to telepathy, I take the liberty of telling you the story of two cases which took place in our city; I ask you, if you publish my letter, to give only the initials of the names I entrust to you.

Monsieur and Madame T— had a cousin, Madame D—, who lived in France. One night they both awakened suddenly, and Monsieur T— said to his wife: “A strange sensation just waked me; I have a very ominous presentiment regarding your cousin D—.”

“I am sure she is dead!” Madame T— exclaimed at once, “for I have just seen her house, empty, in a dream, and her daughter in mourning, crying.”

The clock stood at half-past two. The next day they received news of the death, which had occurred at half-past two. They verified the time.

This was a communication between a dying woman and living persons, but the following story has to do with two living persons in good health.

Dr. N— had ordered some medicines from his druggist; the latter neglected, for a week, to prepare them. One evening the doctor, who was much annoyed by this delay, went to bed with the intention of going to reprimand the druggist. During the night he awakened, hearing, most distinctly, a voice saying, “*At half-past seven in the morning.*” The doctor looked at his watch; it was half-past three.

The next day he went to the druggist, who gave him his bottles, saying: “Ah, Doctor, you must be angry with me; I understand why, and last night when my alarm-clock woke me up at half-past three, to go hunting, I said to my wife, ‘I’ll be back *at half-past seven* to prepare the doctor’s medicine.’ ”

So was it the druggist’s voice which the doctor had heard? How?

It is not for me to draw conclusions, but for the learned. . . . [The customary compliments follow.]

Marie Mavrogordato

Smyrna, January 28, 1902.

(Letter 1025)

Yes, we are investigating everything, without preconceived ideas, without prejudices, and caring only to learn. As for conclusions, it follows with certainty from all these occurrences that there are invisible psychic currents between human beings; ideas travel. They are in the air, as the saying goes.

In the first of these two cases, the thought of their dying cousin reached the minds of Monsieur and Madame T—, passing over the distance which separates France from Turkey; they received it at the same time, through two distinct impressions. In the second the mental telephone came into play between the druggist and the physician.

These psychic phenomena, on which so many learned men still cast doubt, have been observed, we say, in all latitudes and under all conditions. After Montreal, Mexico, and Smyrna, come these observations made in Saint Petersburg.

They have to do with *two impressions of death at a distance*. I take the following accounts from a letter sent me from Russia, in March, 1909:

An eager reader of your works, which are a veritable cult to me, I have no reason for deceiving you, and what I write you is absolute truth.

In 1902 I was living in Saint Petersburg with my husband, who was a professor and a director in a college for young girls. Being, both of us, natives of Moscow, we had left numerous friends there, among others a family named Massaloff, the members of which were two brothers and three sisters, unmarried and already of advanced age.

In my first youth I had had an almost passionate fondness for one of the Demoiselles Massaloff, and I was still deeply attached to her. She was a high-minded person, very learned, and her benevolence was really Christian in spirit; she never thought of herself, always of others. During a severe illness which came upon me shortly after my marriage, she had come to take care of me; her vocation was devotion to her fellow-beings.

Since I had been in Saint Petersburg I had not corresponded with her, but I loved her sincerely I had heard it said that she had sorrows, and that her health left something to be desired, but I did not know she was seriously ill.

In the month of February, 1902, I had a dream which made a painful impression on me; I saw, very distinctly, a funeral procession, and I heard a voice telling me, “*It is Sophie Massaloff’s burial*” In the morning, I spoke of this dream to my husband, who, wishing to take my mind off it, answered, “It’s a portent of long life.” Three days afterward my son, aged

eighteen, came back from his college, bringing some books wrapped up in a newspaper. It was the “Novoié Vrémiá,” which neither my husband nor I ever read, because of our political opinions. Nevertheless, I had read in it, one day, by chance, one of the articles on astronomy bearing your name (of which you speak in “Stella,” page 353).

My son having thrown the newspaper to the ground, I picked it up. At once my eyes fell on the announcement of the death of Mademoiselle S. Masaloff, and of her burial at Moscow, which had taken place the day following my dream.

You may easily imagine that the impression made on me was very painful, and even a little terrifying. I wrote to the sisters of the deceased, telling them how I had learned of my friend’s death. The dream preceded the burial.

Second Occurrence: I had the terrible misfortune to lose my adored husband, on December 25, 1907. Neither my son nor I expected such an early death. As my husband was continuing his work as a professor and director of the girls’ college in Moscow, and did not wish to undergo treatment, we did not think him seriously ill.

On December 24th my son, having eaten supper with his wife and two friends, wished to take a little walk. There was fine moonlight. His thoughts were happy and pleasant. Suddenly — it was at ten o’clock in the evening — a terrible conviction came into his mind which made him stop short. It was like a flash of lightning: “*Father is going to die.*” A shock went through his being. At home once more, he spoke of it to his wife, who tried to comfort him.

Now, precisely on that day, December 24th, at ten o’clock in the evening, my husband fell into a swoon in which he passed away twenty-four hours later.

Here are, dear Master, two absolutely authentic accounts which I submit to you, that you may use them as you please for the general enlightenment.

Eugenie de Berkout

Louga, March 7, 1909.

(Letter 1925)

Yes, observations made in all countries and under all conditions. We may add, at all ages, even by children. A letter dated July, 1920, recounts the following experience:

My husband has just told me, once more, that he lost his grandfather when *about eight years old*, and that the old man had been found one morning, on the floor of his room, lifeless. For three days previously he had lain in bed. One night, when my father-in-law was staying with the patient, my mother-in-law was taking a little rest in her room, with her two children, who were asleep. Suddenly my future husband sat up in bed and cried out to his mother: “Mamma, Mamma, what are you doing? Are you asleep? But grandfather is dead!” My mother-in-law, rather affected, told her little boy to be quiet; he lay down again and was quiet at once; he had not even awakened. At four o’clock in the morning my father-in-law went back to his room and said to his wife: “My poor dear, it is all over. Your father is dead!” — “At what time?” — “At midnight.” That was the precise hour at which the child had warned his mother. He had, moreover, no memory of it on awakening in the morning.

My husband, who is now forty-nine, is ready to attest the facts, as well as my mother-in-law, who is still living and who gave them to me again a month ago; if you wish to verify them, it will be easy.

Jeanne Lumet

Paris.

(Letter 4207)

Telepathic transmission does not seem to be absolutely certain here, since the child had heard those around him speak of his grandfather’s desperate condition. It may be set down, nevertheless, among the facts to be compared.

I possess accounts of several similar incidents in my collection of documents, which enhance the value of those just given; for example, the following, which could not be explained by the hypothesis of telepathy.

Here is an extraordinary impression on the part of a child:

My mother was four or five years old when, one night, waking up with a start, she sat up and greatly frightened her parents by crying three times, “Dies! dies! dies!”

Nevertheless, since she was a very nervous child, they attached no importance to what they took for a nightmare. But in the course of the day they received a telegram announcing the death of my mother’s grandfather, — a death that occurred at precisely the time when she had uttered the cry.

I must add that she and her parents did not know that the old man was ill.

Such is the occurrence, as it was told me by my mother herself, who has retained *an unforgettable memory* of it.

One of your readers of the Department du Gard, who greatly wishes to tell you of this inexplicable happening, but prefers not to be mentioned by name,

N.S.

(Letter 73)

In this case we cannot conceive of any autosuggestion on the child's part.

There are not only physical ties between the members of the same family, between grandfathers and grandchildren, between mothers and their sons. We do not know the laws of incarnation. There are mental ties. The following communication was sent me in April, 1899:

My mother is very affectionate. All mothers are, but with her, affection is so great that it is almost a disease! When a member of the family dies, she cannot escape her eight days in bed, and even on the third or fourth anniversaries she spends two days in bed.

With these facts before us, here is the account:

I was a student of medicine, far from my family. Every time a malady laid its hand on me my mother said to the family, "My son is ill" I always got a letter from home, telling me of my mother's fears, and my sister would add, "She will have it that you are tired out; reassure her." She was, however, always right.

Here is something more striking still. I went — three times, indeed — to give her a kiss, without warning her; I had told no one of my intended trip; it took me thirty-six hours to reach home; the train always arrived after supper. Now, the day when I was to arrive, my mother did not wish any one to sit down at the table — "I am waiting for my son" — and she herself prepared certain dishes which I liked. The family joked with her: "You're going to give us a real meal to-night; it's good you aren't going to put the old bottle away which you got out for your son, — a notion you have today." I arrived. And this happened three times!

Last year, being in Algeria, I went to France to take my final examinations; I did not write home. I received, through the department in which I was, a letter from my sister; she told me: "Our mother assures us that you went to take your examinations, and that you were admitted, but surely you would have let us know if you had left Algeria." Her letter had been addressed to Algeria.

This is what I was anxious to let you know. If this document would be helpful to you at any time, use it. But I shall ask you to give only the initial of my name.

Dr. F.

Drôme.

(Letter 596)

The mental disturbance about to be described is of the same sort as those preceding. It also was told me, as a personal experience, by the celebrated Polish painter Jan Styka, in the following letter, of November 2, 1920:

Dear Master and Friend:

Here is the occurrence of which I spoke to you. It was in 1912. We had left, my son Tadée and I, for Mentone, in order to go to Gorbio to visit the sanatorium. When we got to Mentone we did not find the automobile there which ran to and from Gorbio. We were obliged to go into a confectioner's shop, and to take something to eat there, that we might be privileged to use the telephone to ask to have the automobile sent for us. While we were waiting for it, drinking chocolate, I was suddenly gripped and tortured by most painful forebodings about my grandson Casper, who at that time was seven years old. At that moment I realized just what it meant, — this relationship of parents and grandparents to their grand children. I thought of my wife's father, who was also named Casper. And, sad at heart, I began to weep hot tears; my son, astonished, asked me what was the matter. I told him that I was thinking of my grandchild, and that I did not understand why I was so affected. Well, twenty days afterward I learned, through a letter from my daughter, that at this very moment when I was so overwhelmed, on a Sunday and at the same hour, little Casper had undergone, in Krakow, the operation of trepanning, and had been in danger of dying. The mystery of my emotion was thus explained: Was that not a telepathic phenomenon which confirms tentative theory which you put forward?

Jan Styka

(Letter 4296)

This mental impression at a distance shows us that these phenomena are observed even when there are no cases of death, — in the event of serious accident or illness not followed by death; mental perturbations transmitted by ether waves.

How are our destinies determined; how governed? What ties, what affinities, shape events, unknown to us?

Mademoiselle Germaine Sens, whose home is in Bordeaux, told me on June 3, 1920, of a most curious physiological phenomenon, asking me not to reveal any names. Here is this phenomenon:

X—, a lady of great learning, in 1918 lost a little nephew fourteen years old, who was extremely intelligent. This child lived in Bordeaux.

He had a little first cousin born the same year, the same day, and the same hour as he. The two children were fond of each other, resembled each other, wrote each other letters in which there was a little more than expressions of friendship; it was like a budding love.

Now, the two children died the same year, the same day, and the same hour, and of the same illness, one (the little girl) in Paris and the other (the little boy) in Bordeaux.

(Letter 4152)

The touching union in life and death of these two children inspires reflection. The investigation which I made in this case, as well as in those of other psychic phenomena related by the narrator, furnished, as almost always happens, the fullest confirmation. These fundamental sympathies are rare, but incontestable. They are manifested, above all, between members of the same family, between lovers, between friends. I shall select a few of them from my papers.

Here for example, is a telepathic impression in the case of a twin brother and sister:

I had a twin sister, for whom I felt a very great affection, much greater, perhaps, than that generally found between brothers and sisters.

She was in the home of a friend, about 20 kilometers from my house, when I received, one morning, a letter from the person with whom she was staying; it informed me that my sister was slightly indisposed, but in no danger of any kind.

In the evening of the same day, when I was sitting down at the table to have dinner with my young wife, I suddenly dropped my spoon, crying: "Oh God! My poor sister is dead!"

Unfortunately, it was only too true. I received, half an hour after this warning (if I may use the expression), a telegram informing me of her death, which no one had foreseen.

This is a strange occurrence which I have never been able to explain.

I am not signing my name, having a horror of publicity.

P. B.

March 30, 1899.

(Letter 338)

While regretting the writer's anonymity (he is singularly timid), I think his story true, and am making it public. If people so often have a horror of publicity, it is because our ignorant adversaries ridicule all this, with a lamentable lack of perception, which halts progress. These observations, however, merit our whole attention.

Here is a similar case of transmission, between a brother and a sister:

One day, a Sunday, a most closely united family was having lunch. It was in Scotland. One of the younger daughters, Marian Griffiths, left the table and went into the garden. They looked for her, and found her, seated, her head in her hands, gazing into a hole full of water. She seemed paralyzed by fear. Then she uttered a cry of anguish: she had a feeling that her brother was dead, drowned.

This brother, aged nineteen, who was greatly loved by his sister Marian (it was a family of eight), was then fourteen miles from Blackhall, where the family lived. He had been drowned at precisely that hour, in the Firth of Forth, where he was bathing. This was on Sunday, August 1, 1869⁵⁵.

It is impossible to doubt that this brother, finding himself drowning, transmitted to his sister the mental perturbation of his distress.

Here is a similar impression, in the case of a son and his mother, given by Lombroso, who related, among

⁵⁵ See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1891, p. 364.

others, the following extremely curious example of telepathic communication from someone dying⁵⁶:

Monsieur T. Brusa, aged thirty-seven, who had a very weak constitution, was tubercular and neurotic. He was dining in Superga, near Turin. It was August 3, 1899, at noon. Suddenly he stopped eating and began to weep, asserting that he saw his mother dying in Asti, without his having been informed of her illness in any way. There was no means of calming him.

He left for Asti, where he learned that his mother had really died of apoplexy, on August 3d, at noon.

The woman who had died had, herself, some years before (in July 1899), left her work suddenly because she had perceived her daughter suffering from headache, and had hastened to see her. She had, in fact, found the young girl ill with erysipelas.

Here is a similar case of transmission, between a daughter and her mother. The following telepathic impression was brought to my attention from Russia, on June 12, 1899:

I was ten years old. My mother was living a hundred miles from me. One morning I heard eight o'clock strike; the sound of the bell nauseated me. I began to weep, and had a nervous attack. My tears and restlessness lasted the whole day, without anyone being able to explain them. The evening of the next day, they got a letter announcing the death of my mother at exactly eight o'clock, and the very day of my tears and restlessness.

Helene Danitovich,
Tyraspol, Russia.

(Letter 668)

These mental transmissions between a mother and her daughter frequently occur. Although telepathic manifestations of the dying exist in numbers more than great enough to warrant our convictions, it seems to me that when we come upon them in the course of our investigations our duty is to continue to take notice of them. They are so many stones for the edifice of the future. Having read, lately, that work of Paul Augeux (Hugues) entitled "Manifestations des Esprits" (Paris, 1857), I noted in it the following account:

As my book was being printed, this is what the "Courrier de Lyon" published:

"The night of the 27th-28th a singular case of intuitive vision occurred in the Croix-Russe quarter, in the following circumstances:

"About three months ago Madame and Monsieur B—, who are honest weavers, were moved by a feeling of praiseworthy pity, and took into their home as a servant a young girl from the environs of Bourgoin. She was virtually idiotic; they had met her on the Brignais road, where their house is situated.

"Last Sunday, between two and three o'clock in the morning, they were awakened by her piercing screams; she slept in the work room which adjoined their bedchamber.

"Madame B—, lighting a lamp, hastened to her, and found her in a state of over-excitement difficult to describe; she was twisting her arms in terrible convulsions, calling her mother, whom she said she had just seen die before her eyes.

"After consoling the poor girl as best she could, Madame B— went back to her room. The incident was almost forgotten, when, yesterday, Tuesday, in the afternoon, the postman brought a letter from the young girl's guardian, informing her that during the night of Sunday to Monday, between two and three o'clock in the morning, her mother had died of the effects of a fall from a ladder.

"The poor little idiot left just yesterday morning for Bourgoin, accompanied by Monsieur B—, her employer, there to take over that part of the estate which went to her from her mother, whose deplorable death she had seen so distressingly in a dream."

Though there was not, it seems, any regular inquiry made to verify the incident, it is difficult to suppose it a fabrication, and as a great many absolutely similar ones have been thoroughly verified, this one may, perhaps, be added to the goodly number of observations of these "intuitive visions" as they were then called, or, to express it better, psychic communications at a distance. It must be added that in this case there could be no explanation on the theory of chance coincidence, induced from the subject's uneasiness as to her mother, for the latter did not die of old age or illness but from a sudden and unforeseen accident.

The following experience was similar; I was informed of it by my brother Ernest Flammarion. Among the writers whose works he published was a distinguished young woman, Madame Gina Saze-Bey, winner of the prize in the Beauty Contest in Nice. She had attracted much attention at a festival which he had given in 1893 to bring

⁵⁶ Archivio di Psichiatria 1901. De Vesme, Resme des Etudes psychiques, Dec. 1901, p. 372.

together the principal authors of his important publishing house. My brother said:

I had published three of her novels, and, as she had ceased to write, I had completely forgotten her. Ten years afterward I found myself, on a Friday, at one of the branches of the publishing house in the Avenue de l'Opera, about three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly I had an impression, which persisted, of this charming woman's image; my surprise was all the greater since I had not thought of her for a long time.

The next day I received a letter inviting me to her funeral. When I asked details of her unexpected end, I learned that she had breathed her last at three o'clock in the afternoon, on Friday.

Did she think, as she was dying, of her writings, of her publisher, of the publishing house? Did a wave, speeding through space, encounter a receiving-mechanism in my brain? There is plainly, in this case, something other than a chance coincidence.

Ernest Flammarion

The correspondence between the death and the impression of it thrusts itself upon our attention in all similar observations.

The telepathic impressions presented in this chapter were produced at the moment when the physical and psychic phenomena which gave rise to them took place. At times the impression preceded them, heralded them, — a new mystery.

Thus the following intuitive impression preceded the event. It was told me, on October 20, 1920, by Prince Troubetzkoy. We have already published (page 168) two remarkable observations made by him.

Some years ago the entire family of Ricordi, the celebrated music publisher of Milan, was living at Number 1, Via Omenoni. On the top floor was living his sister, Amelia Brentano, who was seriously ill; she was the wife of a well-known architect and the mother of the famous architect who died prematurely, the winner of the world-wide competition for the best design for the new façade of the cathedral.

The floor below was occupied by friends of the family, the name of which escapes me, Signore and Signora X—. On the evening of Saturday, February 18, 1899, there was a great production at the Scala, but Signore X— could not persuade his wife to accompany him to the theater. She was in great pain. So he went alone. After midnight, when he came back, he found his apartment lighted, the servants up, and his wife in a distressing condition; an inexplicable emotion weighed upon her; something horrible had, in her fancy, *passed before the window!* Her husband, however, succeeded in calming her and getting her to bed. The night passed "relatively" quietly.

Now, the morning of the next day, poor Signora Brentano, under some pretext or other, sent her attendant away, and, driven by a fixed idea, in a sudden paroxysm opened her window and threw herself into the street, where the fall killed her; in its course she had passed before the window of Signore X—'s room.

Prince Troubetzkoy

(Letter 4287)

To seek an explanation of such extraordinary occurrences would merely waste our time, in the present state of psychic and natural sciences.

Space is lacking to continue the exposition of these most curious happenings. Do a hundred cases offer better proof than ten? Yes, but one must know when to stop. The reader has been enlightened: he now knows what to believe.

Here is, however, a particularly remarkable case which I should be sorry to omit.

Love, affection, mutual attachment are not indispensable conditions for the production of these phenomena, as is shown in the following example.

A telepathic impression of death, complicated by singular intuition, was told me in November, 1920, by Madame Suzanne Ollendorff, wife of the famous Parisian publisher. It is worthy of our undivided attention. Here it is:

That which I am about to narrate took place in the month of March, 1909. It was at the time of the postal and telegraph strike, a forerunner of many others.

One morning, while I was combing my hair, seated at my dressing-table, an idea suddenly came to me that perhaps an aunt — who was my only relative remaining on earth — had died at that hour and that on account of this foolish strike I was unaware of it.

But at once I added mentally: “Yes, I’m going to learn of it, for she is really dead, and the parish priest of X— will come to tell me of it.”

X— is the place where my aunt lived, and is distant some hours from Paris. I must add that she was then seventy-eight, but was still faithfully “on duty” and rarely ill.

I must also state that there was little sympathy between us. She was an extremely devout person, greatly attached to the Catholic clergy; she objected to certain independent ideas of mine, which she thought subversive. By nature she was most uncompromising and difficult to get on with. We did not always agree. Nevertheless, I felt a kind of attachment for her, arising, above all, from the fact that we two were the last of our family. In short, the thought that she must have departed this world, unknown to me, haunted me ceaselessly that morning. In the course of the day I received a visit from my husband, who was then only a friend. As I was showing him to the door I told him: “Just think, for some hours I’ve been possessed by an idea that my aunt must be dead, and that I wasn’t told of it on account of the strike; but that I shall learn of it because the priest from X— is coming to tell me.” I added, pointing to the stairway door, “Why I shouldn’t be surprised if I were to see him behind that door.”

I opened the door. The priest from X— was not behind it. My visitor smiled. A short time after his departure one of my friends came to take me out with her. Just then I was brought a line sent by Monsieur Ollendorff, then editor of a great morning newspaper. The line contained simply these words: “If you are still at home when this reaches you, just come over to the newspaper office. I have something important to tell you.”

“I know,” I said to my friend, “what he wishes to say to me: my aunt is dead, and the priest from X— is waiting at the office to tell me about it.”

I read in my friend’s frightened eyes her thought that I must have lost my reason. “Why should you think your aunt is dead?” she said to me. “Why today more than any other day? Besides, what would the priest from X— be doing in the office of that newspaper, which he certainly considers wrong in its views?”

I answered: “Let’s go. We’ll see.”

Some minutes later we arrived at the “*Gil Blas*.” The first thing that we saw was the priest’s long black silhouette, standing out in profile against the doorway.

“Ah,” I cried to him, “I know what brings you!”

“Yes, Madame,” he answered. “Monsieur Ollendorff has just repeated your conversation to me. I am bewildered by it.”

My aunt, stricken during the night by congestion of the brain — which nothing gave warning of — had been found, in the morning, lifeless in her bed. In answer to the cries uttered by her maid-servant, neighbors hastened to come, and these told the priest. The latter, who had been given instructions (for I had a surprise in learning that my aunt had disinherited me in favor of the priests), had vainly sought my address. Not being able to find it, he remembered my husband, who often visited at the homes of his flock. He decided to go directly to the newspaper office, to inform me.

Such is, dear Master, the circumstantial account of this story.

Suzanne Ollendorff

(Letter 4320)

All who know the signer of this remarkable communication have valued her candid fairness, her well-balanced judgment, as well as her special psychic faculties, which were manifested notably in her presentiment as to the Messina earthquake. Once more we must acknowledge that the veracity of these impressions is indisputable.

Gallie-Marié, creator of the role of *Carmen* in Bizet’s opera, at first so widely discussed, had an impression of this musician’s death, at the moment of that death.⁵⁷ “She had made herself,” says the “*Eclair*” of September 24, 1875, “the very incarnation of this incomparable score.” And the newspaper added: “Between her and the composer there had grown up a spiritual communion, in some respects psychic.”

Madame Galli-Marié was on the stage a certain evening in June. Abruptly she stopped singing. She had felt a shooting pain in her side, like a hammer striking her heart. She began again and finished the act; but when she had gone back to her dressing-room she said to those about her: “A misfortune has happened to our Bizet. When I felt that blow, I saw his face rise up before me, for the duration of a lightning-flash. Oh, God! oh, God! how pale he was”

They hastened to make inquiries. Bizet had just died. There had occurred one of those phenomena of telepathy which science accepts today.

Other newspapers reported this event in very different ways. According to one of these versions, while Galli Marie was singing *Carmen* on Wednesday June 2, 1875, at the beginning of the third act, when she was

⁵⁷ See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1905, p. 638.

seeking good fortune in the cards, she automatically turned up the death-portent. Struck by a presentiment, she shuffled the cards, and the death-portent came up again. She finished the act with difficulty, and when she left the stage she fainted in the wings.

That this telepathic impression was received is not to be doubted, although the stories of it differed.

The singer Emma Calvé — told me that in this act of “Carmen” in which she interrogated the cards, she often did so seriously, with conviction, with a definite intention.

How shall we interpret, how define the warnings given by cards? This is not the place. Nevertheless, let us also bear in mind the following experience; an account of it was sent me from Nice on May 12, 1899:

Here is an incident which happened to me personally.

Ten years ago I had gone to Paris to spend some time with my family; my husband had stayed in the country, in the environs of Rouen. One evening I was with a lady, a friend of mine, in Neuilly. After dinner we amused ourselves by getting up a card party. I cut, a card fell upon the table, and this lady gazed at me and said, “Your husband is going to die tonight!” She spoke seriously! Then I left. When I got home I took up a pack of cards and tried what is called an “upshot.” I sought an answer to the preceding warning; the reply was yes. That night I had a great deal of trouble in going to sleep. At a certain moment I awakened with a start, with a frightful tearing at my heart; I got up hastily, ran to the window for air, and then I heard three o’clock strike. I could no longer breathe. At last I drank a glass of water and lay down, without being able to go to sleep again.

The next day I got a telegram which read: “Your husband has just died. Come at once.” He had died at three o’clock in the morning. You can imagine the state I was in after having received this message, confirming the prediction. The terrible suffering which I had felt at three o’clock in the morning had corresponded to the hour of the death.

V. Dubos

Place Béatrix, Villa Orenge, Nice.

(Letter 659)

The supposition that this was a case of mere chance can satisfy no thoughtful mind. Neither is it possible to attribute the vision to a pack of cards. It was the narrator herself who perceived this cruel fact, under the influence of an occult force. Cards help to concentrate thought; they are but a means of clarification. Why? A special discussion of these strange contingencies might, doubtless, enlighten us. The new problems which are not to be disdained are innumerable.

This chapter has just placed before our eyes a considerable number of *mental impressions* coinciding with deaths. Doubts as to these psychic transmissions are no longer possible. There will now pass before our eyes in still greater numbers a series of *psychic manifestations*, more difficult to understand and, nevertheless, as undeniable as the preceding ones.



DEATHS ANNOUNCED BY NOISES, BY BLOWS STRUCK, BY AN UNEXPLAINED UPROAR, BY PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

*Gravitation in the astronomical world, electricity in
the physical world, the life-force in the living world,
spirit in the psychic world, govern the universe,
The universe is a dynamism.*

We have just proved the indisputable reality of impressions of deaths at a distance, deaths unknown to those experiencing the impressions. The knowledge we have of psychic transmissions by ether waves enables us to understand, easily enough, these mental impressions. By contrast we shall here investigate the altogether different cases of revelations of deaths, by noises, by shocks, by mechanical phenomena of various sorts. These physical phenomena are so numerous, so indisputable, that it will be helpful to devote a special chapter to them, establishing their authenticity beyond doubt. I admit at once that it is at present impossible to explain these material manifestations. That is one more reason for, investigating them. Let us look at them squarely. They are of no less frequent occurrence than mental telepathic transmissions, — rather the reverse. We have, moreover, already seen, in Chapter V, manifestations of the dying *before* death, notably in the case of the Ernolsheim organ playing by itself, that of the noises in the rue Nobel in Paris, the lifting up of the bed in a city of Spain, the noisy disturbances in the Lunéville house, the blows struck, for eight nights, on the blinds of an inaccessible floor, etc. In these cases there were phenomena produced by the spirits of the living. We shall now have to investigate phenomena observed at the hour of departure for the other world.

Perhaps the most surprising of the manifestations which we are here investigating are the authentic observations, made in all countries, under the most varied circumstances, of deaths announced by inexplicable noises, by the sound of blows, of steps, of the sliding of feet, by objects being moved about (in imagination, for the most part). My readers may, moreover, have long since been struck by such cases, apart from this present work, by reading, among other books, “L’Inconnu” (General Parmentier, page 64; the poet-deputy Clovis Hugues, page 76; the nun, page 105; Monsieur Janvier, page 108; P. Bouehard, page 111; Manage, page 116; Morisot, page 125; Soulairol, page 143, and so many other authentic cases: pages 108, 111, 116, 125, 142, 146, 147, 153, 154, etc.). Farther on, still others will come under our eyes, in the general chapter on “Manifestations of the Dying.” In order to clarify our most complex investigations as much as possible, and that I may spare my readers the necessity of analytical research by analyzing and making distinctions myself, I should like to sort out, for this chapter, the special, well-characterized observations as to *announcements of deaths by noises produced without apparent cause*.

It happens not infrequently that deaths are announced by violent blows, struck no matter where. It is strange enough, but it is so, and the most rudimentary fairness bids us record the facts as they are. We shall next seek to explain them, if we can, and to interpret them in our search for knowledge of the human being. In general, people have not dared to contemplate these facts, because they are perplexing. Such cowardice is unworthy of the obligations of free science.

I shall select from those which people have been gracious enough to send me, or which I have noted in my research. I shall begin this series with a most singular incident. Monsieur A. Blavet, president of the Horticultural Society of the District of Etampes, who had investigated the influence of colored light upon vegetation, by experiments similar to those which I devised in former days at my Juvisy observatory, brought to my notice, in April, 1900, the highly curious experience which follows. It was vouched for by four witnesses, who both saw and heard. When Monsieur Blavet told of it, the story, as usual, made his hearers laugh in his face.

I was in the college of Sens, in the Department of Yonne, and was sixteen years old, when I received a letter from my sister who was living in Etampes, with my father and mother and a nurse.

My mother was at that time very unwell.

One night the bell — the cord from which (as shown in the sketch below) went from the alcove where my parents slept to the nurse’s room on the first floor — this bell, as I was saying, began to ring loudly.

In all haste my sister, whose room was next that of the nurse, went to look for the latter, and both went down to learn if Mother were ill, and why the bell had rung.

My father and mother told them that they had been dreaming, and that no one had rung.

At that very moment they heard the bell ring again.

My father sprang from his bed.

The bell-cord and the clapper were still in motion. The nurse affected bravery, crying, "Strike away, strike away, *poteau* [post]!" She meant *marteau* [clapper]. "You aren't scaring me!"

There were, thus, four witnesses, fully awake, and nothing could set the bell in motion save some one in the alcove. Then things resumed their natural course. Before going back to bed my father looked at the clock: it was half-past two. The night following the next, he got a letter from Paris, telling him of the death of a relative.

Wishing to ascertain if the occurrence during the night had coincided with the demise, he wrote, and received a prompt reply, informing him that it had happened the very night and at the very hour at which his relative had died; this made him exclaim, "So it's not all over with us!"

Without being religious, my father had spiritualistic convictions. My mother was religious, without bigotry.

I submit these facts to you, which are most circumstantial; they are certainly very remarkable and are worthy of being related to you. I am tempted, like you, humbly to bow before these inexplicable coincidences, and I should be happy if this experience might help to lead you to a solution.

A. Blavet

Étampes

(Letter 895)

It is not to be doubted that a bell made itself heard, was shaken, without any known reason, and that this motion was heard and seen. Nor is it doubtful, either, that this oscillation corresponded to a death. These manifestations fall into two principal categories, each very distinct. The first is objective, the other subjective; the first is external, physical, mechanical, material; the other includes inner sensations. In the example just related the bell was seen in motion; it belongs, therefore, in the first category. It follows that a psychic force may act, at a distance, upon matter. This, moreover, we know, from a long and most varied experience⁵⁸. The example confirms that of which we are already aware.

Now, does the active cause proceed from someone dead or living? There is nothing to prove that this relative was dead when the bell was heard; he might still have been on this side. Our comparative study aims to give us an answer to this question.

I possess a certain number of accounts of similar observations; among others, of this one made in Niort, which was told me in February, 1899. (Letter 197) This concerns the unexplained ringing of a bell, coinciding with the death of a neighbor opposite, who had always manifested a desire to be dressed for the grave by the person to whom this call was sent; the bell rang at the very moment of death.

This sort of death-notice by the ringing of bells is not infrequent. It is found in all countries and all eras. But ignorance as to psychic matters is as wide-spread, with humanity, as ignorance of astronomy, which is saying a great deal.

At the death of Saint Fran de Sales, the following incident was observed. It was related by Nicolas de Hauteville in his "Histoire de la très ancienne et illustre maison de saint François de Sales" (1669), page 319.⁵⁹

On the twenty-eighth day of the month of December, of this same year, 1622, Louis de Sales had met his wife and his whole family at the Château of Thuille. About ten o'clock at night the bell hanging in one of the windows of the château tower, and attached to a cord which went to the bottom of the stairs, began, of itself, to ring loudly, several times. They believed at first that someone had arrived in great haste; a retainer was ordered to go down with all speed and open the outside door, but he was surprised to find no living soul there. After about seven minutes the bell again began its noise, ringing still more loudly; the second time the valet ran down more quickly than the first, but, nevertheless, found no one. When this had occurred several times in the same way, Louys understood perfectly that something altogether extraordinary was about to happen; he gave orders that the cord be detached from the bell, but this was the marvel of it: the bell rang with no cord attached, and the sound lasted so long that the whole family, in great terror, began to pray. Louys shut himself up in his study, and while in ardent prayer he

⁵⁸ See « Les Forces naturelles inconnues. »

⁵⁹ See « *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, » Sept., 1911, p. 281.

learned through a faculty which may be called prophetic that his sainted brother, the Bishop of Geneva, had died that very night.

François de Sales, Bishop of Geneva and of Annecy, had indeed, just died in Lyons, at eight o'clock in the evening. It must be added that the two brothers were much attached to each other, and were dubbed "the inseparables."

These occurrences, accounts of which I, for my part, possess a goodly number, were *first* called miracles, produced by God's will, when they were connected with the lives of the saints. *Secondly*, they were called diabolical pranks when they occurred outside the Church, and *thirdly*, they were generally denied, called meaningless. These three interpretations were three errors. We must, today, investigate the occurrences in full liberty of thought and make use of them in the study of Man.

How, in just what way, were they produced at the moment of death?

Why these noises, and how were they made — these movements, these material manifestations — by a spirit!

I take the following incident from the notes which were handed on to me by my mother; her absolute sincerity on the one hand and her perfect mental poise on the other, were appreciated by all who knew her:

One night, in Saint-Thiébauld in our bedroom, we were awakened by a great noise; we had heard a mirror on the mantelpiece fall down, as well as your father's watch-stand. I got up, and found that the mirror had fallen upon the hearth; the watch had been thrown upon the floor on one side and the watch stand on the other I thought that everything was broken, and, most annoyed, I must say, I went back to bed without further investigation.

In the morning, when we got up, we found that nothing had been broken.

That same morning the postman brought us a letter, telling us of the death of your Aunt Boyet, your father's sister, who had died that very night, in Montigny. What did this manifestation mean? The coincidence is, at least, strange. You know that we had much to complain of in my sister-in-law's conduct as regards us.

Nothing broken! These things are truly strange. It all seems as though it were merely a question of attracting attention. These manifestations, however, do not appear to be voluntary, conscious: this hypothesis would not seem to apply here. The distance from Montigny to Saint-Thiébauld is twenty-three kilometers as the crow flies. It appears to me from the hundreds of accounts which were sent me that these transmissions are by their nature electric.

Here is an incident not unlike the preceding one. Dr. Martin wrote me from Penne (Lot-et-Garonne), in March, 1899, as follows:

My father was living ten kilometers from Cahors. One of his brothers, aged about forty, was living in Figeac, at least eighty kilometers away, and was recovering from an illness, — pneumonia, I believe. The news of him which I had received that morning was very good. That evening, just as my father was putting the candlestick on the night-table, to go to bed, this candlestick, as it touched the marble, emitted a sound that was altogether unnatural, and, without knowing why, my father, very much frightened, told himself, "My brother has died!"

His conviction was such that he left for Cahors in the middle of the night to look for his other brother (an aged canon, who could hardly be called credulous), and he told him the sad news. At once they had horses hitched to a rented carriage, which carried them to Figeac that very night. Their brother had been dead for some hours when they reached their journey's end.

(Letter 148)

In our desire to explain facts by the simplest natural causes, we first think that there was in this case an auditory illusion connected with a presentiment. But this departure in the middle of the night, on a journey of eighty kilometers, and this coincidence that was verified, make us feel, here, the reality of a transmission that was telepathic — magnetic — electric — nameless (the name is yet to be found).

Let us proceed.

I received from a well-known minister plenipotentiary, who asked me not to make his name public, the following story of a manifestation on the part of someone dying; it, too, would lead us to connect electricity with these psychic transmissions:

I had the account of this most curious case from a chaplain, Father F. R—. Not merely his ecclesiastical calling, but, above all, his personal qualities, do not allow me to doubt in the slightest degree the truth of the facts in every detail. I am furnishing (for you alone) the exact names and addresses, but if you publish this narration, I ask you to give only the initials. The

observations were made in the presence of the above-mentioned priest, and of an entire class of the Seminary of O—, including Professor X—, who is now an archbishop. It is therefore a case in which the manifestation was observed by a considerable number of witnesses, not of a haphazard sort.

In 1889 F—, a seminarist aged about twenty-three, was seriously ill; for several months this kept him from attending the courses with his class. Along the wall was a coat-rack, on which there were nails reserved for each pupil's garments. In view of the prolonged absence of F—, one of his comrades had taken possession of his nail, and was hanging his hat upon it.

Now, one day, between eleven o'clock and noon, while the entire class was attentively following the professor's course, the hat on the absent pupil's nail suddenly began to turn, without the least plausible reason being discoverable. This motion was energetic, and lasted for so long (almost a minute) that it drew the pupils' attention, and even the professor's, and made such an impression that they talked of it for the whole day. Every one had the feeling that there was something strange connected with it.

As a matter of fact, in the afternoon of the same day a telegram brought the news of the pupil F—'s death; it had occurred at precisely the time when the hat on his nail had attracted his fellow-students' attention.

Baron de M.

(Letter 964)

Does not all that seem to us absurd, ridiculous, unbelievable?

That is what Ptolemy thought of the hypothesis of the earth's movement, — “supremely laughable.”

This, too, is the effect that the moving feet of Galvani's frogs produced.

The following manifestation of a death, by a violent gust of wind, is similar to that which General Parmentier brought to my notice, — Number I, Chapter III in my work “L'Inconnu.” It was sent me from Budapest in 1900, and is given literally:

Dear Brother:

If I take the liberty of addressing you by this name, it is because I feel that I am your brother in the ideas we have in common as to the faculties, still occult, of the human soul. I believe it my duty to inform you as to a phenomenon belonging in the category of those which you are analyzing.

My father had been ill for several weeks with severe neuralgia; this weakened him so that, at his age, seventy-five, his death was to be feared. My wife and I were in a state of continuous apprehension, when on the night of April 4th-5th we were awakened with a start by a *tremendous gust of wind, which opened, with a great noise, the window of the next room; we had heard it being closed the evening before by the maid-servant. We felt the current of air come in through the crack under the closed door which separates the two rooms.*

At once I had the feeling that my father might be dead. I struck a light, and found that *it was a few minutes past three o'clock.*

I said nothing to my wife, in order not to disturb her repose; but when, the next day, we received by telegram the fateful news of my father's death, my wife acknowledged to me that the moment we awakened she too, had a feeling like mine but *more definite*; that is to say, while I felt the possibility of the end, she was sure of it.

I must add that the gust of wind was exceptionally violent.

When we reached the place where my father was living (Francisco, in Hungary, 175 kilometers from here as the crow flies) one of the first things I asked was the time of his death; the answer was that *my father died a few minutes after three o'clock.*

I was not the victim of an illusion, being by nature calm and given to reflection, and accustomed, on account of my profession of electrical engineering, to observe minutely, and not to draw conclusions too promptly.

I give you my word of honor that I have added or omitted nothing in telling of the circumstances which seem to me essential, in judging the occurrence, and I authorize you to publish my name and my calling.

You may gain information about me from Monsieur Désiré Korda, manager of the Electrical Department of the Fives-Lilies Company (Paris, rue Caumartin), and from Monsieur Maurice Loewy, head of the Paris Observatory.

Please, dear brother, allow me sincerely to express my great esteem.

Léopold Stark,

Budapest, II Cöivohaz, 34 Rue Hongroie.

(Letter 988)

After reading this account, which I give in its entirety, there can remain no doubt in our minds as to the incident, though it be still absolutely inexplicable to present-day science. We are gathering data, as Tycho-Brahé did for Kepler. If we had but one case of this sort, we might, strictly speaking, content ourselves with the supposition that a gust of wind came just at the right moment, by a chance coincidence; but there are too many cases, established with precision.

The following experience, equally unquestionable, is of the same sort.

In a letter which I received in 1899 from Monsieur Mariage, there were two occurrences to be remembered. I have given only one of them ("L'Inconnu," page 116). The second belongs here:

My late lamented grandfather, who has since died, a man of solid mentality, of sound judgment, and not in the least inclined to hallucinations, told us of it often. Sure of himself, and that he had really heard it, personally, he never yielded in the least when people wished to insinuate, when he told the thing the hundredth time without changing a syllable, that perhaps unconsciously he had been the victim of a dream or the dupe of drowsiness. I shall let him speak for himself:

"My sister-in-law, a young girl of nineteen, fell ill shortly after my marriage with her sister. The illness was long, and at the close of the autumn, the sad season which was to carry her off, we looked each day for a fatal outcome; the whole family spent every night near her. I must tell you that this dear friend had always felt the greatest tenderness for me, and demanded, ceaselessly, my presence at her bedside. I was then living at the other end of the village. I was taking a little rest, given over to sad thoughts, for I foresaw clearly that her life could not last much longer, when suddenly, and three times repeated, furious blows shook the shutters and the window; both of these were closed with fastenings; the window gave on a little court, surrounded with houses; there was no opening from our side. I got up, opened the window and the shutters, and found that nothing had been damaged; but I had the presentiment that my sister-in-law had just given up the ghost. I went down, and had taken scarcely twenty steps in the street when a neighbor, a woman, said to me, weeping, "She's dead!" — "I knew it," I answered.

(Letter 104)

Certainly it is strange, fantastic, and incomprehensible: a charming young girl, who expired at a tender age; and her death were manifested by furious blows shaking the windows! These crude physical phenomena remind us of the pranks of lightning and electricity. Perhaps a comparison of all these strange occurrences will lead to a solution. We shall speak of this later.

My writing-table is crowded, this very moment, with a host of observations of this sort.

A reader wrote me the following at the beginning of my investigation:

That I might carry out your wish, I put your questions to fifteen young men in my course for adults. Thirteen answered that they had never heard facts of this sort spoken of; but two declared that they knew of them. Here is the chief example. A young man of twenty-three told me of it. His mother heard, one night, in the attic above her room, a great noise comparable to that of a pile of wood falling down; it startled her into wakefulness, and continued for some seconds. Three days afterwards a letter informed her that, probably at the same instant (she had not noted the time), one of her near relatives had died in Montbéliard.

It was only on learning of this death that she concluded that there was a connection between it and the noise which she had heard; her whole family had vainly sought a reason for this noise the morning of the next day. If you are interested in this case, I am ready to ask supplementary information from these two young men, and to give you their names, if they authorize it; I do not doubt that they will.

Méline

Teacher in Thiéfosse, Vosges

(Letter 178)

Here is another case of a material manifestation coinciding with death. I am taking it from a letter received in March, 1899.

My father and I are living in Isère. One of our friends was seriously ill, and each day we expected to see him die.

One evening, after having paid him a visit, we had gone to bed, fairly tired (for he lived three or four kilometers from our home). Scarcely were we in bed when *a violent blow was struck on the head of the bed, and the curtains were set in motion by an inexplicable puff of air*. My father leaped out of bed, saying, "He is dead!" He looked at the time, and dressed himself hastily, that he might go back to his friend.

The latter had died at the moment when we had heard the blow and felt the puff of air.

I can vouch for the exactitude of the facts given. People may say that there was in this a strange coincidence, that the piece of furniture cracked, by chance; that someone moved the curtains. People may say what they wish. But these are the facts.

Texier

Dockyard clerk, Ruelle Foundry, Charente

(Letter 101)

Curtains set in motion by an inexplicable puff of air. I have perceived this many times in my experiments with Eusapia Paladino and other mediums; the readers of "Les Forces naturelles inconnues" ("Unknown Natural Forces") have come across it. This name will long remain applicable to these accounts. We think, perhaps, of electricity. But what is electricity? An unknown force. Let us proceed in our search. The letter given below was sent me from Les Abrets (Isère) on April 13, 1899:

My great-grandfather on my mother's side, Joseph Bardin, who died forty-three years ago at the age of eighty, was a man who preserved the patriarchal and devout traditions of bygone times. He kept a tobacco shop in Les Abrets, and at the same time performed the duties of secretary at the town hall.

Every evening, in the midst of his numerous family, prayers were read aloud, all joining in, in a room adjoining the tobacco shop. One evening, at about nine o'clock, while the whole family was at prayers, an *extraordinary noise* made itself heard in the office, as though the heavy counter had been violently shaken, *making the scales and everything upon it resound noisily*. All rushed into the room, to learn the reason for this unusual noise; to their great stupefaction, they found everything in place and nothing unnatural could be discovered. When the interrupted prayer had been resumed, there was another noise, absolutely like the first: in the face of the general restlessness my great-grandfather told them not to move, and added that this noise must have been made by the soul of a member of the family who had just died; he went on to say that it was probably his mother, who lived at Charavines, and he said a *de Profundis*. Now, that same night a special messenger from Charavines, seventeen kilometers away, confirmed my great-grandfather's prevision by announcing that his mother had just died: the hour of her death coincided exactly with the hour at which the noise of the evening had made itself heard.

E. Deschaux

Landowner in les Abrets, Isère

(Letter 595)

This gives rise to the same reflections as the preceding accounts. These observations are innumerable and unexceptionable. They are sometimes more complicated than the preceding ones.

The following communication is particularly interesting, as showing us (1) a telepathic transmission from some one dying (or dead) at the hour of the demise, with steps heard and considerable noise; (2) converse with the person dead, which might have been due, however, to the narrator's subconscious mind. I do not classify this experience with the phenomena of Volume III, since the fact that the deceased person exercised an influence has not been proved, though it is possible. Let us read the following detailed letter:

In 1870 I had a brother sixteen years old, whom I loved like a son. He had caught a cold which affected his entire system; this had developed into galloping consumption, and he had come: to spend some time with me. I was then living on the seashore, where the air was very sharp. After some weeks I perceived that my brother was wasting away. I sent for my physician, who advised me to take him speedily to Brittany, to my mother's home, where, since the air was softer, he might, they assured me, live some months longer, otherwise he could not survive for more than fifteen days. I followed this advice, and took him to Nantes. At the moment of parting he asked me for a ring I wore, by which I set great store; yielding to his wish, I took it from my finger and placed it on his, making him promise me that it should not leave his hand, and that if, one day, it ceased to please him, he would send it back to me, and would give it to no one else. He gave me his promise. Pardon me, dear Master, if I enlarge upon these details, but it is necessary in view of the facts which I am to tell you. This took place in June, 1870.

On August fourteenth, in the same year, at midnight, I was busy with urgent work; my maid was with me. Two persons lived in the house, the owner and I. Suddenly we heard the street door, which the owner had bolted at eleven o'clock, open and close noisily. My maid and I looked at each other, asking ourselves who could be coming in at this hour. "It's doubtless someone going up to the owner's rooms," I said to my maid. "Let's listen as he comes up." The door of the owner's apartment was at the head of the stairs, while to reach mine it was necessary to turn to the right and follow the hallway. We heard a man's step, very heavy and dragging, exactly like those of one ill, who could scarcely walk. The steps, instead of stopping at the door at the head of the stairs, turned, on the contrary, to the right, and came toward my apartment. Terror-stricken, I leaped up and turned the key in the lock, saying aloud, "No one shall come into my room." I went back and threw myself on my sofa, pressing my hands over my wildly beating heart. As for my maid, she had turned green.

I had been seated for barely two or three minutes, when *a terrible noise*, like a piece of furniture being overturned, made us both start. We rose and sought vainly the cause of this uproar. There was no trace of any piece of furniture or anything that had fallen down. At once, we both thought of my brother. Both of us, without caring to admit it, for fear of frightening each other, had recognized his heavy, dragging step.

The next day, on August fifteenth, I got a telegram telling me that he had just died. At once I wrote to my mother, as I could not make the trip, to take the ring from my brother's finger, and to send it to me, since it was a precious keepsake. The next day but one, I got an answer telling me that this was impossible, since my brother, before he died, had taken the ring from his hand and put it on my younger sister's finger. As I had no reason to doubt my mother's words, I insisted no further, but I was not satisfied, and doubtless I reproached my absent brother mentally for breaking his promise.

For more than two months I thought of this in spite of myself. One night I dreamed that I saw my brother lying in his coffin; drawing near him, I knelt down, lifted his head, kissed him, and said: "It wasn't nice to break your promise; you knew I thought a great deal of the ring, and that it was only because of my great affection for you that I deprived myself of it, to give it to you. Then, why didn't you have it sent back to me, instead of giving it to our younger sister?" At these words I saw my brother gazing at me with an expression of distress and annoyance. He answered: "My poor sister, I didn't give your ring away; it was torn from my hand, rather than drawn off, when I was breathing my last; they have lied to you; our sister took it from me."

Struck by these words, I awakened with a start, and it was impossible for me to go to sleep again. I had but one fixed idea, — to obtain exact info and to learn if I had really been deceived, and thus to gain the certainty that the dead may visit us during sleep. Some time afterward, when my mother came to see me, I informed her of my dream, and to my great astonishment I saw her turn pale. She cried: "It's true! What your brother told you is the absolute truth; but I did not wish to tell you."

Madame Bovolin
Saint-Armand, Cher

(Letter 584)

The signer's name is not unfamiliar to my readers. (, "L'Inconnu," page 546.)

What conclusion shall we draw from this account?

It would not, perhaps, be difficult for some people to accuse the narrator of having made up the story. As for me, it *would* be difficult, and I should regard this accusation as fundamentally unacceptable.

In the second place, one might seek to apply here the old hypothesis, dear to physiologists, of an hallucination. But to do this we should have to extend the hypothesis to cover two persons, both of whom (1) heard the steps on the stairs; (2) recognized them; (3) heard the noise of a piece of furniture being overturned. Let us admit that this involves complications. We must, then, find a connection between this so-called hallucination and the coinciding of the death; between them there would appear to be a relation of cause and effect. Thirdly, the revelation as to the gift of the ring must be explained.

Assuredly, the narrator's brother produced the manifestation *at the moment of death* (steps heard, and an uproar in the room); he may have acted in this way though still alive; the incident does not furnish absolute proof that the actions of some one dead were involved in it.

Does the apparition in a dream prove this? Not absolutely, either, for the idea that possibly the ring was torn from the dying or dead boy's finger by his sister may have had its origin in Madame Bovolin's mind. Prepossessions, ideas, take on a precise form in dreams. This particular one may have connected itself with the dead boy's image. It is not rare that we think we see and hear, in dreams, imaginary persons and the dead.

The reader of these pages is a reasonable being, well-balanced, free from all preconceived ideas. I am giving him the documents in the case; he is as able to form his own conclusions as I. He will admit, it seems to me, that the most probable explanation is that the narrator may have thought, without the dead boy as an intermediary, that their sister took the ring from the brother's finger, and that the dream was the consequence of this supposition. For that reason, I am classifying this document not among manifestations of the dead (though it is not certain that it does not belong there) but among manifestations of the living at the moment of death. Our method must remain exacting! It is by the free discussion of phenomena that our enlightenment will progress.

We have just been shown examples of noise and uproar, — all equally incomprehensible, and yet impossible to deny. I have received accounts of a considerable number of observations, which it would require too much space to give. Nevertheless, each has its own interest. Here is a letter from one of the men who founded the Astronomical Society of France (in 1887), my studious colleague A. Schmoll, who combines the observation of the strange things in the heavens with musical composition which has brought him so many splendid pupils from all

Europe:

Paris, November 30, 1899.

Dear Master:

Yesterday we had my nephew to luncheon, — the Reverend Father Palmace, attorney for the Sacré-Cœur, 33 rue de Picpus. Since I told him that I had met you the day before, and what the subject of our conversation had been, he began to recount the two occurrences given here. The first of these I had known of vaguely since youth; it must have happened about 1855. As for the second, my nephew had already related it to me in the same words about ten years before; but he did not remember this and believed yesterday that he was telling me of it for the first time (a detail which it is, perhaps, helpful to note), it was upon my request that he wrote for you the following account.

I have told you, orally, of this other occurrence of the same nature which took place in my father's home, in my childhood, about 1844 or 1845. Two leagues from our home lived an old great-aunt of ours, who was ill. One night, at two o'clock in the morning, a terrible noise suddenly made itself heard on the stairs (of our home) which led from the first floor to the second. It was as if the heavy chest at the head of the stairs had been *thrown from the top to the bottom of this stairway!* My sisters, who slept in different rooms, on the first and second floors, awakened, very much frightened. Trembling, they turned on the lights, and went to the head of the stairs to see what had happened. They saw nothing unnatural. Everything was in its place; no piece of furniture had been disturbed. The next day, at seven o'clock, they came to tell *us that our aunt had died at two o'clock in the morning.*

With deep and sincere affection,

A. Scholl

(Letter 815)

Here is the reverend father's letter:

First Occurrence: I remember perfectly (I was, perhaps, between twelve and fifteen years old) that my revered father had an intimate friend to whom he was deeply devoted. This friend lived two kilometers from our home. When he fell seriously ill my father went to visit him. He came back and told us: "My old friend Adams will not live through the night, it seems to me." We went to bed a little after nine o'clock, so far as I can remember. Toward ten o'clock we were awakened by a blow on the outer door (which was never locked); heavy, dragging steps halted at our bedroom door. At once we all recognized the very characteristic walk, weighed down by age, of Adams, our great friend; we knew, however, that he was dying at his home. A half-hour afterward we were brought the news that he had died at the time we had expected.

Second Occurrence: Twenty-five years ago I was a professor at our College of S—, a large city in South America.

Among our pupils' distinguished families, there was one of which I was particularly fond. The great-grandmother of the mother of one of my pupils, the Marchioness of X—, Spanish by birth, and more than a hundred years old, had a great affection for me: she called me her "big grandson." My priestly calling necessitated my making her frequent visits. The evening before her death I went to see her, to give her the last consolations of our Holy Church. She thanked me effusively for my "filial love" for her. I left her very late at night. When I got back home I went to bed, but scarcely had I gone to sleep when I was awakened by a terrible cry which seemed to pass through my room very slowly. Frightened, I leaped from my bed, lighted a candle, and recognized perfectly, in the cry of distress I had heard, the voice of my venerable friend the marchioness. So that I should not believe it an illusion on my part, I immediately wrote on a slip of paper: "It is half-past two in the morning, and I hear perfectly 'great-grand-mother's voice. Can she have died at this very hour?"

(She lived a walking-distance of twenty minutes away.)

Early in the morning I was called into the drawing-room. The visitor was a grandson of the marchioness. Before he had said a word to me I showed him my slip of paper. "It was at exactly that time," he told me, "that our little mother, whom we loved so dearly, died, with a great cry." We were astounded...

(Letter 815)

Let us, then, take note of these three episodes: (1) A terrible uproar; (2) heavy steps heard; (3) a great cry.

In the ease of the second experience, *the sound of steps* was heard; and also in one before that (Madame Bovolin). The phenomenon is not unusual. It is found here and there, — even in the life of the learned botanist Linné.

This celebrated Swedish naturalist left to his son, when he died (in 1778), a manuscript of about two hundred pages. This manuscript was found in 1823, among Dr. Acrel's papers; it was given to the University of Upsal and published. In it we come across the account of a manifestation, through the hearing of steps, of some one dying.

During a large part of his life Linné had noted, most conscientiously, occurrences which seemed to him strange and inexplicable. There are a great number of accounts of dreams, of intuitions, of apparitions, of incidents interesting from a psychological point of view. Here is the one which comes within the scope of this chapter. He writes:

In the night of July 12—13, 1765, toward midnight, my wife heard someone walking, for a long time, with heavy steps, in my museum. She woke me up. I, too, heard it, though I was certain that no one could be there, since the doors were locked and I had the keys in my pocket. Some days later I learned that my dearest friend, Karl Clerk, a commissary, had died at precisely the same hour. It was his step, undoubtedly, I used to recognize Clerk, in Stockholm, merely by hearing him walk.⁶⁰

These manifestations occur in such large numbers that instead of a chapter they might make a volume; our only perplexity is the investigation and selection of them. We shall find the following one particularly striking.

An example of sounds, heard by two people, announcing a death, was related to Dr. Richet by Monsieur Théophile Lemonnier, a druggist in Rennes. The phenomenon was all the more worthy of attention because it was noticed independently by two different people.

One night in September, 1891, at a quarter to six, Monsieur Lemonnier was awakened by an unusual, violent noise from the shutters which barred the windows of his pharmacy. This noise lasted for one or two minutes. He dressed himself in all haste and went to open the door: he saw, in the street, only street-sweepers; he questioned them and they told him that they had seen no one. There was, moreover, a night-bell on the door of the pharmacy, and a patron would have used it, instead of knocking in this way.

Astounded by this inexplicable incident, Monsieur Lemonnier went back into his room to finish dressing. At seven o'clock he saw one of his best friends coming in, — Monsieur Nivot, a surgeon-dentist.

“Well,” said the druggist, “what brings you here at this early hour?”

“Upon my word,” the other answered, “something quite extraordinary. Just imagine, — at a quarter to six I was suddenly awakened by an unaccustomed noise; someone was striking repeated blows on the door of my room. ‘Don’t knock so loudly!’ I cried. ‘I’m not deaf! Who’s there?’ But the noise continued, and I hurried to open the door. There was no one there; everyone in the house was still asleep. I dressed, supposing it some sort of a joke, and quickly went downstairs. The grating at the entrance had been closed all this time, and the porter assured me that no one had come into the house.”

“Well, my dear fellow, the same thing happened to me, and that’s why you see me up at this hour,” I answered.

We gazed at each other for a moment, and then expressed the same thought at the same instant: “Poor Escolan must be dead.”⁶¹

This Escolan was one of their friends; he was an old lawyer, a distinguished cellist. Prostrated by grief, almost blind, and seriously ill, he had in these latter days been sustained only by the devotion of Messieurs Nivot and Lemonnier, who went to see him every day at the town hospital. A powerful tie united the three friends. They went immediately to the hospital. The night-watchman, seeing them arrive, made a gesture which they understood at once.

“He’s dead?” they asked.

“Yes.”

“At what time?”

“At a quarter of six.”

Did this warning by mechanical means, of which we have so many examples, precede death, follow it, or precisely coincide with it? It appears that there was an exact coincidence, as in the case of Gaston Crémieux’s execution in Marseilles, on November 30, 1871, and of his manifestation by the striking of blows, in the cell of his friend Clovis Ilugue (“L’Inconnu,” page 26); there are a hundred other like examples.

Mademoiselle Gabrielle Renaudot is a member of the Astronomical Society of France, a contributor to the “Revue scientifique,” the “Revue Générale des Sciences,” to “La Nature,” to the “Journal de la Jeunesse,” etc. She sent me, in 1907, an account of the following occurrence, which I published in the “Annales des Sciences Psychiques,” of August, 1907:

The following curious phenomena were observed in October, 1906, in the city of Annecy:

⁶⁰ See *Revue d'études Psychiques*, De Vesme; 1903, p. 153.

⁶¹ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1910, p. 22.

A young woman, who had been married for a year, was ill of tuberculosis. One day, feeling more tired than usual, she had not gone out, contrary to her habit, and had even allowed her husband to remain at her bedside. One of her friends, Madame Balemand, aged twenty, had also come to keep her company. The husband, knowing that his poor invalid was near her last hour, feared to see her die without the last sacraments; but, on the other hand, he did not dare to summon a priest, for fear of frightening her. She was not in the least devout; she did not suspect, at all, the gravity of her condition, and had refused all religious consolation.

Nevertheless, a priest had been warned discreetly. The latter went to the dying woman as though by chance, to pay a call. During the conversation he spoke to her of confession. But she answered that, since she did not believe that she would die soon, she would consider what arrangements she might make later on. Nevertheless, she consented to have a mass said for her. The priest blessed her, and went immediately to the church. While he was saying mass the young consumptive died. Her husband and her friend, Madame Balemand, were present at her last moments. Now, some minutes after her death they heard *three loud blows* struck upon the door. The husband went to open it, and asked who had knocked. No answer. No one. He went back to sit beside the dead woman's bed. A second time *three violent blows* resounded upon the door. It was opened once more. Still no one.

Madame Balemand, from whom I had this story, is a woman most sound in mind, not superstitious, and not devout. She was so profoundly impressed by this occurrence, which she witnessed, that since that day she has never dared enter her deceased friend's dwelling.

Gabriel Renaudot

It appears to me that in the face of all this testimony it is impossible for us to doubt the reality of these experiences, however inexplicable they may be.

The learned writer Edouard Noel told me of a case of telepathic transmission the memory of which was preserved by his family. Its authenticity is not debatable; its value is not diminished by the fact that it took place long ago. Here is an extract from his letter, sent in November, 1918:

My book "Le second voyage de Micromégas sur la planète Terre" is soon to appear, and I am confident that it will please you. In the meantime I consider it my duty to inform you, for your most sincere and painstaking research, of a telepathic occurrence which took place in my family; you will certainly be struck by it.

I had a great-great aunt who lived not far from Arms, in 1812. Her name was Leblanc. She had a son, an officer in the French Army, then in Russia.

One night, when she was asleep, she was awakened by an unusual noise of hail or grape-shot. She lighted her candle and opened the window of her room, and found that the night was very calm and that there was fine moonlight. After some moments of thought, being able to observe nothing unusual in her home, she went back to bed and fell asleep.

But she had scarcely lost consciousness when the same crackling of grape-shot awakened her once more. Then uneasiness gripped her, and she thought of her son.

"Etienne," she told herself, "will not come back."

She went to her little desk and wrote down her thought in a note-book, while awaiting daybreak.

After that night she received no more news of her son.

When peace had been signed she made inquiries at the War Department, and learned that her son had been killed at the very time when she had experienced the anguish of this phenomenon.

Edouard Noel

(Letter 4057)

Let us repeat that until now people have been led to attribute these noises, concurring with deaths, to illusions of hearing, to chance coincidences, just as they have attributed the visions to disordered eyesight. These coincidences are found to be much too numerous, now that we are investigating them seriously, for this superficial judgment to persist:

It was in Madame Leblanc's mind that all took place. There was nothing external; it was a mental impression. How is this form of warning produced? We do not know.

As we remarked at the beginning of this chapter, in speaking of Saint François de Sales, these observations have been made in all epochs.

Walter Scott was a witness to a noisy manifestation of death, according to his biographer Lockhart, who published the following letter, written by the author of "Ivanhoe" to his friend Daniel Terry, on April 30, 1818.

The new wing of Abbotsford was then being built, and Scott was living in an old part of the building. Here is an extract from his letter:

“The present state of my house has brought mysterious troubles. We were awakened night before last by a very loud noise, as though some one were *dragging thick planks along, in the new part*. I believed that something had fallen down, and thought no more of it. That was about two o’clock in the morning. Last night, at the same hour, the same noise made itself heard. Mrs. Scott, as you know, is rather timid; so I got up, Beardie’s broad saber under my arm,

“Straight as a spear
Ready for combat”

“But everything was as it should be, and I cannot discover the cause of all this noise!”

Mr. Lockhart added:

The day on which Mr. Terry received the above letter, in London, he was lunching with Mr. William Erskine, and they were earnestly discussing the sudden death of George Bullock. This took place on the very night, it would appear, on which Scott was awakened by the “mysterious noise” of which he speaks here. The furnishing of the new rooms in Abbotsford had been put into Bullock’s hands; he had made himself loved by all, young and old. A week afterward Scott again wrote to Terry:

“Were you not struck by the fantastic coincidence of our nocturnal troubles at Abbotsford with the sad event which happened I swear to you that the noise was that of half a dozen men busily employed, *laying down planks and putting furniture in place*; and there was, nevertheless, no one on this spot at that moment: nothing is more certain. With a few more details, the story might take its place in Granville’s collection, or Aubrey’s. In the meantime you may put it down, together with poor Dubisson’s warnings, as a remarkable coincidence.⁶²

Waltur Scott

With these noises, this shifting of objects, this more or less violent movement, these tumults of various degrees of loudness, those which are real must be distinguished from those which are imaginary or fictitious. Even with these last there is a cause exterior to the percipients; they are objective, and nevertheless real from a certain point of view. Thus, for example, if we begin with the first which I related (“L’Inconnu,” page 64), that of General Parmentier, — a window closing with a loud noise and opening at once, — we may suppose an illusion of sight and hearing on the part of the witnesses, caused by a mental disturbance emanating from the hunter who had been killed a short time before his friends sat down at table to await him, in his home. We must interpret in the same way the case next given, — a bed shaken, noises and clatter in the next room, without anything really having happened, a psychic disturbance coinciding with the death of a friend six hundred and fifty kilometers away. In these and other similar cases the phenomenon is subjective, due to psychic transmission to a distance.

The case of Monsieur Blavet’s bells was different, as were those of Saint François de Sales’s bell; my father’s watch-stand; the seminarist’s hat, and so many other incidents. In these examples the phenomenon is objective, external to the observers.

With subjective phenomena we need seek no other explanation than that of the psychic transmissions of which we know; but for the real shifting of objects, movements that have been proved, it is altogether natural to think of electricity. We must take care to acknowledge that we know absolutely no thing of the nature of this force.

How many examples might we not cite to support us in connecting the two!

I published, rather a long time ago (1904) a little book, “*Les Caprices de la Foudre*” (“*The Pranks of Lightning*”), which is full of these curious phenomena. In it one may read of:

Objects moved without any one touching them (page 287).

Pictures torn from the wall (page 219).

A cupboard door hurled to a distance (page 221).

A chest of drawers broken to pieces (page 29).

Keys pulled out of locks (page 222). Keys taken out of a door and hidden in a wooden shoe (page 218).

Bells rung (pages 203 and 281).

A clock stopped, its pendulum unfastened (page 209).

⁶² Madame Crowe. *Les Côtés Obscurs de la Nature*, p. 183.

Watches, which had stopped, started again (page 196)

Watches magnetized (page 209).

Candles, gas-jets, electric lights lighted or put out (pages 219 and 226).

A mirror unfastened and placed lightly on the floor (page 24).

Stones lifted from a hearth and placed on both sides of a sleeping child (page 137).

Three children, in bed, thrown, safe and sound, out of a house, while the bed was broken into a thousand pieces (page 216).

A pillow thrown to a distance, without harm to the child sleeping upon it (page 214).

Stones, weighing hundreds of kilograms, hurled afar (page 210).

A hat turned hind side before (page 217).

Ball lightning which pushed open a door and entered, an unusual visitor (page 86).

Ball-lightning which played round a young girl without harming her (page 19).

A woman, disguised as a man, stripped entirely naked by lightning (page 25). A woman, struck by lightning, stripped and her clothing hung on a tree (page 26).

(The number of those struck by lightning and stripped entirely naked is really rather large. Garments are rent to ribbons, shoes violently torn off, and the man who was struck gets up safe and sound!⁶³)

Two women were knitting; lightning suddenly took their needles from them (page 27).

A stroke of lightning killed a priest at the altar, bore away the host, and hid it under rubbish (page 28).

A miller's boy was split in two from head to foot (page 28).

The butt-end of a gun was torn away and borne into an adjoining room (page 219).

Shot was *meltd*, in a gun, without the powder catching fire (page 224).

A young man crossing a public square was caught up by lightning and carried a distance of fifty meters. Tile sent me an account of it (page 120).

A hat was thrown ten paces away, without there being the least breath of wind (page 130).

In the midst of a brilliant dance in the evening lightning entered through the fireplace, and, covering the dancers with soot, made negroes of them (page 137).

Bodies were reduced to ashes, their clothing remaining intact (page 123).

Conversely, the clothing was burned, and the bodies left intact (page 123).

Golden necklaces were volatilized without leaving any trace (page 195).

The gilding was removed from picture-frames (page 205). Nails were torn from a satin sofa and left beneath a tile on the roof (page 199).

Windows were split, and the panes of glass vaporized (page 215).

Coins were stolen by lightning (page 209).

A pile of plates was split in two (page 222).

Et cetera, et cetera. How many other examples of freakishness might we not add to these?

In July, 1911 lightning struck the office of the station-master of Figanières (Var), and *emptied all the ink-stands, without leaving anywhere the least spot of ink!*

That same month, in Vinon, near Toulon, it emptied a pool in which there was three meters of water.

And photographs of lightning! Some time ago I gave the name *ceraunic rays* (from *xepauvos*, and

⁶³ On Dec. 9, 1907, in Rio de Janeiro, an army lieutenant, M. A. de Vasconcellos, together with eighteen men, was thrown to the ground by a stroke of lightning. The men got up suddenly as though moved by a spring. The officer remained on the ground, unconscious. His uniform had been torn, all the buttons had disappeared, as well as three thousand *reis* which were in one of his pockets. His shoes were torn and thrown to a distance. The man was not killed. When shown these convincing proofs, he was the most astonished of all. "Send them to France, to Flammarion!" he cried. They are preserved in the museum of my observatory, in Juvisy.

lightning) to these flashing rays. Here are some examples:

On June 17, 1896, a day-laborer, named Elisson, was struck by lightning, in a hut near Pertuis (Vaucluse) and the rays photographed upon his chest, through his clothing, the design of a poplar-tree and of a pine-tree one hundred meters away. I received drawings and an account of this curious phenomenon from the Mayor of Pertuis, Dr. Tournatoire, who had carefully examined the victim. The man who was struck got up safe and sound. (Page 250)

On June 27, 1866, in Bergheim (Upper Rhine) a stroke of lightning photographed the leaves of a linden-tree upon the backs of two men, bowling them over without killing them. The learned physicist Him, of the Institute, wrote me that the cleverest draftsman could not have done better. (Page 258)

In the summer of 1865, Dr. Derendinger had his pocket book stolen on a railway train. Some time afterward he was summoned to examine a man struck by lightning; he saw on the thigh of the stricken man (who had not been killed) a photograph of his monogram (two Ds, crossed), which was inlaid in steel on his tortoise-shell pocket-book. The man struck by lightning was the thief. (Page 266)

One day lightning struck the Church of the Holy Saviour in Lagny; knocked over fifty of the congregation praying there; smashed the altar, leaving suspended, fastened no one knew how, the picture representing Jesus Christ; carried away the curtain covering this picture, pulling it from the iron rod without having moved this rod or broken the copper rings; tore into four pieces the card on which was printed the list of prayers for mass; traced upon the altar-cloth the sacred words of the Consecration, omitting the supreme ones, *Hoc est corpus meum et Hic est sanguis meus*. (Page 273)

These phenomena, and a thousand others, are established by evidence, proved, unquestionable. One of the most singular, and the most humorous, is, perhaps, this one, published in Volume IX of the "Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Sciences." The occurrence took place in the environs of Nimes. "Some young girls were talking together, when a flash of lightning knocked them over. They got up, without being wounded. But one of them complained of pricklings, which became very sharp and painful. Her friends wished to find out what had happened, and they saw, to quote the Latin account: "*non sine miratione, pudendum perustum, ruberrimum, labia tumefecta, pilos deficientes usque ad bulbum, punctosque nigros pro pilis, unde cutim rugosissimam; ejus referunt amica, primum barbatissimani et hoc facto semper imberbem esse.*" (Page 117)

Let us stop with this prank of lightning. The manifestations related in this book, attributed at times to "spirits," are really no more extraordinary than those of lightning.

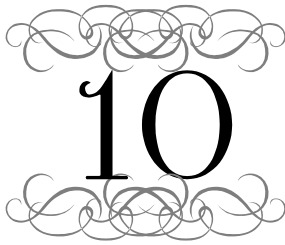
Let us also take note, in this connection, of the error of physicists who suppose that in order that a phenomenon be "real" it must be reproducible, at will, in a laboratory. Just reproduce these feats of lightning!

However it be, we may suppose that electricity plays an important part in the phenomena studied here.

These occurrences demonstrate again and again, to our own satisfaction, that Man's physical and psychic functioning is not confined within the boundaries of his body, and may exert an influence at a distance.

Moreover, gravitation has long since led us to investigate energy acting at a distance.

We shall again encounter these noises and these blows in the general chapter on "Manifestations of the Dying at the Moment of Death"; but it was helpful to take note of them in this chapter in order to reflect upon them and to realize their interest. Before investigating the manifestations as a whole, let us halt at certain occurrences that are particularly remarkable, intermediate between life and death; certain phases of them might be attributed to the living. The first of the observations revealed in the following chapter is, despite its dramatic quality extremely difficult to explain. In these instances we find ourselves between human life and death. Let us consider them carefully.



BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH - THE OCCURRENCES IN WHICH THE INFLUENCE OF THE LIVING MAY STILL EXIST

Time, that shifting semblance of a fixed eternity.
J. B. Rousseau

The documents which we are bringing together here are so numerous, even with a very restricted selection, that they call for (I cannot repeat it too often) as orderly a classification as possible, that we may distinguish with certainty what belongs to Life and what to Death. We have read of manifestations and apparitions emanating with out doubt from living beings; we shall examine those lying between the two states, those which may be interpreted from the point of view of life as well as that of death. We shall in this way gradually approach occurrences the origin of which lies, indubitably, on the other side of the mysterious portal.

I shall begin this chapter with one of the most impressive cases which I know of; it is also patently authentic, — one which I have already recounted in “L’Inconnu,” in the chapter on telepathy in dreams. I shall ask those anxious to arrive at a definitive conviction for their permission to reproduce it here, for our present research. The narrator writes:

In the course of the first days of November, 1869, I left Perpignan, my native city, to go and continue my study of pharmacy at Montpellier. My family consisted of my mother and my four sisters. I left them very happy and in perfect health.

On the twenty-second of the same month my sister Hélène, a superb girl of eighteen, the youngest and my favorite, had asked several of her young friends to her home. About three o’clock in the afternoon they went, accompanied by my mother, the Plane-tree Walk. The weather was very fine. After a half- hour my sister experienced a sudden uneasiness. “Mother,” she said, “I feel a strange shiver running over my whole body; I’m cold, and my throat hurts badly. Let’s go in,”

Twelve hours afterward my adored sister expired in my mother’s arms, asphyxiated, laid low by croup; two doctors had been powerless to conquer it.

My family — I was the only man who could represent it at the funeral — sent me telegram after telegram, to Montpellier. By a terrible mischance, which I still deplore today, not one of them was put into my hands.

Now, during the night of the twenty third to the twenty fourth, eighteen hours after the poor child’s death, I was the victim of a frightful hallucination.

I had got back to where I lived at two o’clock in the morning; there was nothing on my mind; it was still full of the happiness I had had on the twenty-second and twenty-third, days devoted to a pleasure-party. In very high spirits, I went to bed. Five minutes afterward I was asleep.

At four o’clock in the morning I saw my sister’s face before me, *pale, bloody, lifeless*, and a cry — piercing, repeated, plaintive — reached my ears: “*Louis, what are you doing Why don’t you come? Why don’t you come?*”

In my agitated, nerve-racked dream I took a carriage; but in spite of superhuman efforts I could not make it move forward. And still I saw my sister, pale, bloody, and the same cry — piercing, repeated, plaintive — reached my ears: “*Louis, what are you doing? Why don’t you come? Why don’t you come?*”

I awakened abruptly, my face flushed, my head on fire, my throat dry, my breathing short and jerky, while my body was streaming perspiration.

At eleven in the morning I reached the school, the victim of an unconquerable melancholy. Questioned by my comrades, I told them of the cruel experience, just as I had suffered it. It called forth a few jests at my expense. At two o’clock I went to a class, hoping to find some rest in work.

As I was coming out of the class room, at four o’clock, I saw a woman in deep mourning approaching me. When she was two paces away she lifted her veil. I recognized my elder sister, who, uneasy on my account, had come, in spite of her deep grief, to ask what had become of me.

She told me of the fatal happening, which nothing could have made me foresee, since I had received very good news of my family the morning of the twenty-second.

Such is the account I submit to you; it is, on my honor, absolutely true. I express no opinion; I have held myself to the mere recital of it.

Twenty years have passed since then; the impression is still as deep as ever — above all, at this time — and even if my Hélène’s features do not rise before me with the same distinctness, I still hear that same appeal — plaintive, repeated, despairing

—“Louis, what are you doing? Why don’t you come? Why don’t you come?”

Louis Noell.

Druggist in Cette

This account, published in 1891 by my friend Dr. Dariex, in the *“Annales des Sciences Psychiques,”* of which he was editor, was accompanied by documents calculated to establish its authenticity. Let us note the following letter from the observer’s sister:

My brother has asked me, at your request, to send you an account of the meeting I had with him, in Montpellier, after the death of our sister H el ene. In spite of the bitterness of such painful memories, I shall submit my testimony to you.

Seeing my brother on the street — he recognized me first, despite my garb of mourning — I realized that he was still in ignorance of H el ene’s death. “What further misfortune has come to us?” he cried. When he learned from my lips of H el ene’s death he gripped my arms with such violence that I almost fell backward. When we got back to where he lived, I had to bear a terrible scene. Mad with anger, my brother, who was very nervous, very intense, but also very good-hearted, almost maltreated me. “What a calamity!” he cried. “What a misfortune! Oh, why didn’t I get the telegrams?” And he struck the table violently with his hands. One after another, he drank three large decanters of water. There was a moment when I believed him mad, so bewildered was his gaze.

When he had come to his senses, some hours afterward, he said, “Oh, I was sure that a great misfortune was going to overwhelm me.” He then told me of the hallucination he had experienced the night of the twenty-third to the twenty-fourth.

Th er ese Noell

This experience has the greatest value; it concerns a phenomenon of considerable significance, which deserves the most painstaking attention. Dream, nightmare, vision, mental disturbance, hallucination, telepathy — the name, the word, is no explanation. That there was a chance coincidence is not admissible; there was, without any doubt, communication between the dead sister and the living brother. Was it before death or after? This impression was made the night of November 23-24th, toward four o’clock in the morning, and H el ene Noell had died eighteen hours before, on the twenty third, about ten o’clock in the morning, after twelve hours of suffering. We think at first that the sister’s mind exerted a direct influence on the mind of the brother by telepathic action, as in so many cases cited in his work. One might believe that H el ene’s wish was carried into effect when she was still alive, toward the moment of her most sudden, tragic death. But in this case why should the telepathic communication have taken eighteen hours to be received? The distance from Perpignan to Montpellier is non-existent for telepathy, as for electricity; a thousand kilometers would be passed over as a hundred, or as ten.

According to his own account, Louis Noel was, at the time of his beloved sister’s death, on a pleasure-party; he did not suspect his sister’s condition; his mind seems to have been entirely taken up with personal sensations that were very intense. There would, therefore, be nothing surprising in the fact that the thought was not felt. We know, indeed, that the receiving brain must be in a proper state of harmonious vibration. This ether-vibration, however, may have reached him, may have remained latent, and have revealed itself to his calm intelligence only during sleep, eighteen hours later.

This is a hypothesis not to be rejected; but it is only a hypothesis.

Another hypothesis is that his sister, who had been dead for eighteen hours, really addressed him at the hour when he heard her, really renewed her appeal, — that in spirit she sped to her absent brother. This, too, is only an hypothesis, one less probable than the first, but we must not reject it absolutely. The first hours after death may pass in a sort of dream.

In this case we should have a real manifestation on the part of someone dead.

These are hypothesis, methods of investigation. We must not forget that we are here entering a new world, entirely unexplored.

It is not to be doubted that there was a psychic current, of unknown nature, between the dead sister in Perpignan and her living brother in Montpellier.

We have examples of vision at a distance, in dreams, as though the spirit of the sleeper were borne afar. We might also assume, with our present knowledge of all these facts, that the brother was carried in spirit toward his sister. But in this case one sees what is going on, whether it be in a normal dream or in a trance, and the brother would have perceived his sister stretched out dead upon her bed. But on the contrary, it is she who spoke to him, called him. Could she have been carried to him in her astral body? That is another hypothesis.

We cannot conclude that there is in this case any certain evidence of a manifestation of the dead. It reveals itself to us as lying between the two states. Our scientific and honest-minded duty is to note it as a document for use in studying the problem. It has a very great value as a rigorous and precise bit of observation.

The generally accepted psychology of the human mind has until now remained aloof from truth which is still uncomprehended, still mysterious. All must be studied, all evolved. *Impressions may remain in a dormant state in our minds and reveal themselves only after a long period of time.*

Here is a comparison which is not, perhaps, as forced as it may appear: One day in April, 1916, I took some photographs on the Cape of Antibes. A rush of work kept me from developing them until September 26, 1920. I thought that nothing would remain of the impressions taken four years and a half previously. Well —

(1) When the plates were developed in the usual ways, there was nothing visible.

(2) A plate remained in the revealing fluid all night; the image showed itself, the morning of the next day, very distinctly.

This image had remained latent for four years and a half invisible, its presence suspected by no one save myself.

Twenty eyes, a hundred eyes might have examined this transparent plate, with the red lantern of the photographic laboratory, without discovering on it the slightest trace of an impression. It took the special revealing fluid to make the image appear after fifty-three months.

It is noteworthy that of this country-side recorded photographically in April, 1916, there remained in September, 1920, nothing in nature exactly as it was; certain trees had grown, others had died; several springs, several winters had fashioned the scene anew, and there was not the same water in the waves which beat upon the shore. A summer-house had even been built; all was changed. A photograph of this same site which we might take now would show a complete difference. Nevertheless, if today there remained nothing, absolutely nothing, of this country-side; if an earthquake, a geological cataclysm, a flood had caused all to disappear, the landscape of April, 1916, would nonetheless have been preserved, in a latent state, upon the photographic plate. A suitable chemical combination sufficed to make it emerge from invisibility, from the unknown. The same reasoning would apply to the photograph of a human being.

The case of Monsieur Noell leads us to think that the brain may retain latent images in the same way. This we knew, however. In the further progress of our psychic investigation we must take into account this retention of images in estimating the mental make-up of a human being.

Might not these images reappear long afterward? Frederic Myers has, as my readers know, put forth this explanation.

It is even probable that invisible forms remain, here and there, in a house, just as in an empty casket there linger traces of a perfume long since removed. Is not the origin of the word *manes* the verb *manere*, to remain?

Other similar cases will, perhaps, enable us to find a definitive explanation.

Here is a rather curious example of an apparition which, too, seems to have emanated from someone still alive, who was dying. The person who appeared did not say, as in so many cases, "I'm dead," but "I'm going away."

This case is vouched for by Victor Hugo, who related it in his notes, collected under the name "Choses vues" ("Things Seen"). It was given under the date of December 5, 1846. Let us listen to the story of it:

On the twenty-seventh of last November an aged woman name Madame Guérin, sixty-six years old, and living on the fourth floor, 34 rue des Fossés-da-Temple, had an illness which did not seem serious, and which the physician had diagnosed as indigestion. It was five o'clock in the morning. Her daughter, a widow named Madaim Guérard, who was living with her, had got up early, had lighted her lamp, and was working, seated in the chimney-corner, near her mother's bed. "Well," she said, "Madame Lanne must have come back from the country." (This Madame Lanne was the retired chandler at the corner of the rue Saint-Louis and the rue Saint-Claude.) "I must go to see her today," Madame Guérard added. — "That would be useless," said her mother. — "But why?" — "Because she died an hour ago!" — "Why, Mother! What are you saying? Are you dreaming?" — "No, I'm wide awake; I haven't slept the whole night; as it was striking four I saw Madame Lanne pass by, and she said to me, "*I'm going: are you coming?*"

The daughter believed that her mother had dreamed this.

Daylight came; she went to see Madame Lanne. That woman had died in the night, at four o'clock in the morning. That evening Madame Guénin began to vomit blood. The physician who was called in said, "She won't live longer than twenty-four hours." And, in fact, on the next day, at noon, she had a second attack vomiting, and died.

I knew Madame Guérin, and had the facts from Madame Guérard, a pious, honest woman, who never lied in her life.

Victor Hugo

As every one knows, the poet was then living near by, in the Place des Vosges.

We have in this case a most curious double psychic phenomenon, — (1) The apparition of the dying woman to her friend; (2) an invitation to die, too, quite calmly, as though it were a question of a short trip, or even of a walk.

In all probability this woman was not quite dead when she showed herself to her friend, and said to her, "*I'm going; are you coming?*" The death of the latter, which took place the next day, may have been the result of the shock caused by this apparition. We have here, as in the episode of Héléne Noell, a case lying between apparitions of the living and apparitions of the dead.

The following incident resembles the two preceding ones in the matter of hearing. I am taking it from a letter dated March 27, 1899.

I can affirm, on my honor, that my grandfather, dead today, told us that one morning he had heard a knocking on the window of his room, and had seen one of his relatives, who said to him, "Come quickly!" This apparition had coincided exactly with the death of the said relative, which was not known until the next day.

Paul Faivre

Saint-Cieir-du-Taillou, Lower Charente

(Letter 69)

Unlike Madame Guérin, the hearer made no haste to accept the invitation.

In the following example it was, again, a voice which made itself heard. A correspondent, whom I have already quoted above, wrote me on April 13, 1899:

Rosalie Deschaux, my aunt and godmother, who died in my home in 1884, aged seventy-two, told me that when she was from sixteen to seventeen years old, and was living in Biliou, she had a very close friend, a young girl of her own age, Emilie Trouillaud, living in the same district but in another hamlet. The latter being, one day, slightly indisposed, she went to call on her; she found her unwell, but did not remark any serious symptoms in her condition. Some hours later, at nightfall, she felt, to her great terror, a strange sensation, as though she had been brushed by the wings of an invisible bird, and heard these words distinctly: "Farewell, Rosalie!" She then recognized, very clearly, her friend's voice. My aunt went back home, sobbing, and cried, "Emilie is dead: she just said good-by to me!" Her mother scolded her, seeking to make her understand that it was caused by imagination, etc. But while they were talking, someone arrived, running, to announce Emilie's death. It had come suddenly, with nothing to indicate that it was to be expected.

E. Deschaux

Landowner in Abrets

(Letter 595.)

Plainly, we have here a manifestation, at the moment of death, of some one dying. The girl was dying; she was yet dead.

I have received accounts of a certain number of observations as to the dead, who, themselves, told of their demise immediately after it had taken place, and even before it had been formally announced. These examples have a connection with the three preceding ones. The question for us, here, is whether or not those who manifested themselves were *living*. The following letter, sent me on September 13, 1900, was taken from my collection:

I consider it my duty to add to your telepathic observations a phenomenon with which I myself was concerned.

I was sixteen years old and was in Ancone, Italy, with my father and mother. My grandmother, who had brought me up and who loved me dearly, was then living with one of her sons, in Saint-Etienne.

One night, when I was sleeping alone in my room, I was suddenly awakened by feeling a hand placed on my face, and was terribly frightened to perceive my grandmother, dressed in black and in a white cap; very sadly she told me, "I am dead," and disappeared.

Terrified, I leaped out of bed and took refuge in my parent's room. They made fun of me, calling me out of my senses, a visionary. But, because I was terrified, they allowed me to stay with them. It was then three o'clock in the morning.

That evening we were to go to a ball at the magistrate's residence, to which we had been invited. Now, that same day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, my father received a telegram telling him of his mother's death. (She was seventy-six.)

He left for France immediately, and upon his return he informed us that she had drowned herself in a large pool belonging to the villa in which she was living; that her body had been found, at five o'clock in the morning, by the family gardener, but that the suicide must have taken place at the very hour at which my poor grandmother had appeared to me.

He added that, on the day before, she had told my uncle, her son, of the great regret she felt at being separated from me. She had thrown herself into the pool dressed just as I had seen her, in a black silk dress and wearing a white cap.

Alexandrine Miwlon

Former hospital interne; head of the medical clinic

18 rue d'Espagne, Tunis.

(Letter 942)

This grandmother, who drowned herself in France, appeared to her granddaughter in Italy, telling her, "*I am dead.*" Attack it as you wish, the occurrence is there before us; it is exactly like an astronomical observation, an observation in meteorology, physics, or chemistry; it is as worthy of acceptance as the phenomenon of a rainbow, a ring about the sun or the moon, a meteorite, — any heavenly or terrestrial phenomenon whatsoever.

It is quite time to embody these realities in a new chapter of positive, experimental science.

Let us examine this account more closely; let us analyze it rigorously. Let us discuss it, whether it be "psychic physiology," as Littré thought, or something quite different.

The sensation experienced by the narrator was double,— (1) A hand placed on her face; (2) the sight of her grandmother. These two impressions were not objective. It was not her grandmother who came to touch her face and to show herself; it was her brain which was acted upon, and which gave her these two sensations. But there is no effect without a cause, and the cause, in this case, could only have been the woman who committed suicide.

A mental illusion, a chance coincidence, mere hazard, — such is the contention of those who are ignorant of the number of these phenomena. This childish solution can no longer be taken seriously.

No, there is here an indubitable instance of cause and effect. This young girl's grandmother did in fact exert an influence. She acted upon the mind of her granddaughter.

The question is whether she exerted this influence before or after her death. She did, indeed, say, "*I am dead.*" But may one not have such a thought, at the moment at which one feels oneself to be dying, and before dissolution?

Now, there is in my possession, among the numerous narrations which I have received, more than one analogous account. (See in particular, "L'Inconnu," page 70, — Madame Bloch's story, in which her nephew, dying in Paris, while she herself was in Rome, appeared to her and told her, as the preceding case "I am dead.")

If someone appears and says to you, "I am dead," this may be interpreted in a sense — in the common, hackneyed sense — as meaning: *My body is dead.*

But there can be, obviously, two interpretations.

It happens often enough that at the time when this announcement is made by the person concerned, he is not dead, but is only in his death-agony, in a coma, in catalepsy' the organism halts, the soul goes on.

Still another question arises:

According to the explanation by telepathy, it is admitted that a kind of radiation emanates from the dying person's brain, from his spirit, still in his body, and is dispersed in space in ether waves, — successive, spherical waves, like those of sound in the atmosphere. When this wave, this emanation, this effluvium, comes into contact with a brain attune to receive it, as in the case of a wireless-telegraph apparatus the brain comprehends it, — feels, hears, sees. Such a thing is possible. It has not been proved.

It would seem even more simple to suppose a direct transmission, in a straight line, from the agent to the percipient. The grandmother, when she was committing suicide, thought of her granddaughter, and her psychic

force was transmitted directly to the granddaughter, from France to Italy. This interpretation of the phenomenon would seem more plausible than that of a spherical wave spreading out everywhere, uselessly, and without an aim.

The fact that the apparitions manifest themselves in the garments in which the dead were clothed at the moment of death would indicate a kind of photographic transmission, such as we found in Chapter III.

It was, doubtless, at the very moment of drowning that the grandmother touched her granddaughter, touched her physically. When a person is drowning (according to the accounts of those who have been brought back to consciousness) it sometimes happens that he sees all the years of his life pass before him, during the few seconds that the immersion lasts; time would appear to be annihilated (fifty years= three seconds). This is still another problem to be elucidated.

We must classify this phenomenon among the intermediate occurrences between life and death.

The following experience belongs in the same category, — death announced by the person concerned. Was it someone dying or dead who manifested himself in this way?

Here is a letter (522) from Madame Poncet in Marseilles:

In 1884, the year of the cholera in Marseilles, I left for Bagnères, with my husband and children. I had been there scarcely eight days, when one night I was awakened abruptly, without apparent reason. My room, in which I slept alone, was absolutely dark; I saw standing on the rug beside my bed a person surrounded by a *luminous* aureole; I gazed, rather agitated, as you may imagine, and recognized my husband's brother-in-law, a doctor. He said to me, "Notify Adolphe; *tell him I am dead.*" At once I called my husband, who was in bed in the next room, and told him, "I've just seen your brother-in-law; he announced his death to me."

The next day a telegram confirmed this news: an attack of cholera (when he was taking care of destitute patients) had carried him off in a very few hours.

Is a person who declares that he is dead really dead? One might think that this is the case. Nevertheless, there are instances in which the person is not yet dead, as we have seen. The strangest thing about it is, perhaps, that manifestations of this sort are not as rare as one might believe.

(Let us note, besides, the luminous aureole; we shall encounter it again.)

Why do they announce that they are dead, when they not yet dead to those about them? Does one see oneself dead before being dead? At what moment is one really dead? Never, in reality.

It is the comparison of all similar occurrences that may best enlighten us. Let us call to mind the following experience ("*L'Inconnu*," Chapter CLIII):

I was a lieutenant in Saint-Louis, in Senegal. One evening, after spending several hours in the company of gallant, gay comrades, I went to bed at eleven o'clock. I dozed off, after some moments. Suddenly, I felt as though something were pressing upon my chest; abruptly roused, I lifted myself upon one elbow, rubbing my eyes, for my grandmother was there, before me. The good woman was gazing at me with eyes that were almost dead, and I heard—yes, I heard—her weak voice telling me, "*I've come to say good-by to you, my dear child: you will never see me again.*" I was astounded, and, to make certain that I was not dreaming, I got up.

The apparition had lasted a few seconds.

As a matter of fact, my grandmother, aged seventy-six, had died in Rochefort. Her last words had been about me: "I shall never see him again," she had repeated ceaselessly. Death had come during the night in which I had seen her, and, if the difference in longitude is taken into account, at the exact hour at which she appeared to me.

These are the facts. I can vouch for their scrupulous exactitude.

Julien Lagarrue,

Captain of Marines, in Hanoi

These occurrences are met with everywhere. One may read in the Paris newspaper "*Le Petit Bleu*" of January 4, 1903, the account of an apparition of a daughter in Melbourne (Mademoiselle Angèle Frapperit, afterward Madame André Malbec) to her mother in Paris. The daughter spoke these words: "Mother, I am dead." This happened at half-past ten in the evening. The next day a telegram informed the mother of the death.

Monsieur L. Bouthors, head tax-collector in Chartres, told me ("*L'Inconnu*," page 412) that during the war of 1870 a lady whom he knew (the wife of an officer), who was shut up in Metz, saw his father, Dr. Bouthors, in a

dream. He was her physician; he appeared at the foot of her bed, and she heard these words: "*See! I have just died.*"

He had died, as a matter of fact, on that very day, September 18, 1870, at five o'clock in the morning, without having been ill. The logical course would have been for this telepathic transmission to take place after death.

I repeat that these enigmatical manifestations, which may be classified as coming between life and death, are innumerable.

My worthy colleague Mademoiselle A. Vaillant wrote me from Fronquevillers, on March 25, 1899:

Madame Dassonville, the mother of one of your readers, had a godson named Constant Touzet. This godson had lived with Madame Dassonville from the time of the expiration of his military service until his marriage. He then established himself in Arras, in the street in which his godmother lived. Some years after his marriage he fell dangerously ill, and Madame Dassonville went every day to ask about his health. One morning she said to her husband, as she was getting up, "Constant Touzet is dead. "Why do you say that? You can't know it," her husband answered. — "I do know it," she replied, "*for he came to say goodbye to me last night, and I'm going at once to see how things are with him.*"

He had, in fact, died in the course of the night.

Madame Dassonville's daughter was then aged nine, and was sleeping in an alcove in her parents' room. She heard what they said as to Constant Touzet's apparition and his death, and remembered it as on the first day; she vouches for this by adding her signature to mine.

A. Vaillant

S. Dassonville

(Letter 307)

This was still another case of a dying man's good-by. The theosophist Leadbeater had from a witness a personal account which belongs here:

One evening his correspondent, then in the midst of his studies, had gone to bed rather early, at half past ten, he perceived by the light of a large fire burning on the hearth, his father's form, well lighted up. The form lifted a hand and made a sign to him to approach. At once he sprang from his bed and rushed toward the apparition, but it vanished.

Completely overwhelmed, he began to search through his whole room, but soon convinced himself that he was absolutely alone. The outer door was still locked. Moreover, the form of which he had caught a glimpse was certainly that of his father, though his expression was more tender than usual. Had he been the victim of an illusion? He went back to bed and tried to go to sleep.

Shortly afterward he was thoroughly awakened by a second apparition in the recess of the door: its face wore the same expression, and the same summoning gesture was insistently repeated. Thoroughly determined, this time, not to let it escape him, he made but one bound from his bed to the apparition, but was again disappointed; his extended hands closed on empty air; once more the most painstaking search convinced him that it was absolutely impossible for any living being either to escape from the apartment or to hide there.

He succeeded, nevertheless, in going to sleep again, but was not long in awakening, greatly agitated.

His father was before him once more. But this time his expression and gestures were not the same: an air of profound but resigned regret had replaced his former deeply tender look; his lifted hand no longer beckoned the young man to approach, but motioned him away, slowly and sadly. And, instead of vanishing instantly, as before, his outline disappeared little by little, and his form seemed to fade.

It was ten minutes to two. The young man would have liked to hasten to his family, but how could he, at that hour? His father was the pastor of a rather distant parish; he had left him in perfect health some weeks before. But, profoundly impressed by this vision thrice renewed, and convinced at last that there was something extraordinary in these occurrences, he felt that it would be impossible to stay there any longer without making sure, personally, that his father was alive and well. Early in the morning he left for home.

A day of rapid travel effaced to some extent the impression that the event of the night had made upon him. In the evening, when he reached the avenue on which the parsonage was, his uneasiness had almost vanished. He even felt happy at the prospect of surprising the family, gathered round the fireside. But when he neared the house his heart began to beat violently: all the shutters were closed. A nervous apprehension gripped him, to such an

extent that he stood, for some moments, unable to knock at the door. It was opened at length, when he had plucked up courage, by the serving-man, whom he had known since childhood:

“Oh, sir,” said the man, “you’ve got here too late! If you’d only come last night! Yes,” he added, in reply to the young man’s anxious inquiries, “yes, the master has left us, and with the only words he was able to utter, after his attack, he begged for you. He fell sick at ten o’clock last night, and half an hour afterward, when he could speak again, his first words were about you: ‘Send for my son,’ he said. ‘I must see him once more.’ We told him that a messenger would be sent at dawn, but he no longer heard us, and seemed to fall into a deep trance again. Then at quarter to twelve he was awake for a few minutes, but all he could say was, ‘How much I should like to see my son!’ At last, just as he was going to die, he opened his eyes and seemed to recognize all of us, though he was too weak to speak much; but he was able to murmur: ‘I’m going away: I should so like to have spoken one last time with my dear son, but I can’t live until then.’ And he passed away so peacefully that you might have thought he had gone to sleep.”⁶⁴

The dying man’s visit was therefore, in this case, the realization of an intense desire. His longing was unquestionable, and was manifested before death.

The thought-transference was instantaneous; it produced before the son’s eyes the image, plainly recognizable, of his father. Was a kind of double of the father transmitted to the son. This is possible, in view of what Chapter II of this volume has shown us; but it is not a necessary assumption, in view of what the succeeding chapter taught.

I published in “L’Inconnu,” several accounts of tactile manifestations at a distance (among others, those on pages 97 and 184). They seem still more extraordinary than those of sight and hearing, and are also rarer. Here is one related to me by an absolutely honest-minded person: there can be no doubt as to her sincerity; my readers have already made her acquaintance (Volume I, page 388).

Cherbourg, January, 1914.

Dearly Loved Master:

I shall begin this letter by telling you of a manifestation of the dying which cannot fail to interest you.

At the end of March, 1902, I received, in this town, from Marseilles, a telegram announcing the death of my husband’s mother, which had occurred the evening of the previous day.

My husband had been busy in the hospital for the previous twenty-four hours. I went to tell him of the grief which had come to him. He said to me, “She must have died about ten o’clock yesterday evening.” (We verified this time afterward: it was exact.) “Yesterday, when I was in bed, half awake, it seemed to me that someone was kissing and caressing me. I even asked aloud, ‘Is that you, Suzanne?’ The gas was lighted in the room. I am convinced that my mother made a last effort to reach me and kiss me, before dying.

I admit that I thought my husband had had a hallucination; but I must say that, since that time, he has never ceased to believe that his mother came to bid him good-by before dying. What strikes me most in this experience is that my dear husband is *an absolute materialist*, and that he is always striving to undermine, even to the point of causing me sorrow which he does not suspect, all my spiritualistic ideas and my hopes of a Beyond.

Suzanne Bonnefoy

(Letter 2575)

In September, 1914, I entered into personal relations with Monsieur and Madame Bonnefoy; several times since then I have spoken with the sympathetic head physician of the Cherbourg naval hospital, of this manifestation, which he remembers with the greatest clearness: it did not lead him to believe in survival after death. He thought that this telepathic transmission had taken place before his mother’s death (this is also my opinion), but that it was of a purely physiological order. His mother was living in Marseilles, and he in Cherbourg.

These physical impressions of deaths or accidents at a distance reveal themselves in every imaginable form. Count A de Gramont, of the Academy of Sciences, received an account of a particularly curious case of tactile telepathy. It concerned a wound received in war, and was vouched for (and thoroughly attested) as having occurred during the night of March 7th-8th, 1916 Monsieur Bathelot, head accountant of the Angers Electrical Company, was suddenly awakened by a most intense pain in his little finger, on which there was a ring given him by a friend, Monsieur Morin, an artist who had been called to the colors as an infantry sergeant. It seemed to Monsieur Bachelot

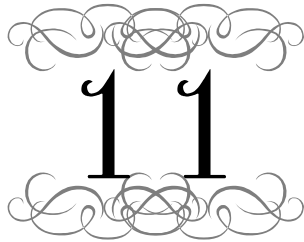
⁶⁴ Leadbeater, *L’autre côté de la Mort*, p. 185.

that the ring was gripping him like a vise, and, half asleep, he drew it from his finger. Now, that very night, toward four o'clock, *Sergeant Morin had been wounded*; this is attested by the medical records of the army.

My readers may remember having read in "L'Inconnu" (page 361) of a similar tactile impression, — Madame Severn waking up with a start, under the impression of having received a violent blow on the mouth — one which cut her lip — at the instant (seven o'clock in the morning), at which her husband, in a boat, was wounded on the lip by a blow from the tiller.

The numerous communications which I have received would lead to a belief that the feelings of affection between parents or between friends must manifest themselves through material acts; nevertheless, is it not more probable that they come into play still oftener through intangible psychic sensations? I have received more than one bit of testimony in support of this.

These varied manifestations *between life and death* are intermediate with respect to the preceding accounts, and those which are to follow. They have to do with those still living. We now reach manifestations of the dying at the moment of death, and we shall have the impression that in certain cases these dying persons may already be dead. This transition between the two states remains most mysterious; but have we not a personal interest in studying it? Inevitably, each one of us will pass that way. Though Berkeley contended that we are sure of nothing, we are absolutely sure that our bodies will perish. They say that Massillon, beginning a sermon in Lent, before Louis XIV, with the words, "*We are all mortal,*" perceived obvious annoyance upon the great king's noble visage, and added, "Or, at least, almost all." The "Sun King" has vanished, and with him superfluous and diplomatic oratorical precautions. He left Saint-Germain, whence the spires of Saint Denis, his future tomb, could be seen, that he might build Versailles, — after having looked for a site even as far away as Juvisy, — and succeeded in losing the royal abbey to view. Let us not be cowardly. Let us face the problem squarely. For thirty years one of my friends has even had his tomb on his property, two paces from his study; his health is none the worse for it.



MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DYING AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH (EXCLUSIVE OF APPARITIONS)

Nothing is so brutally conclusive as a fact.
Broussais

The purpose of all the preceding investigations was to bring us to this point. But manifestations of the dying have already been presented, under various classifications, all through this second volume, — warnings, mental impressions, physical phenomena, etc. We shall in this way have reviewed these most numerous and varied occurrences connected with death, that we may then reach those which follow dissolution. We shall still confine ourselves, with the greatest precision possible, to manifestations which take place at the moment of death. We shall do well to continue our explanatory method, to subdivide our work, and to distinguish apparitions in the strict sense from diverse manifestations. We are prepared to elucidate what follows, through the investigations presented up to this point. Let us begin with general manifestations, and reserve “apparitions” for the last chapter of this volume.

It is probable that most of the cases about to be investigated have to do with beings still alive, — concern the hours, the minutes, preceding death, — but it is possible that a certain number of these manifestations were produced by persons already dead. The intelligent, careful reader is the best judge. We are making our investigation together. The subject is extremely complex.

We are endeavoring, as may be seen, to select from the various occurrences those which may make clear to us, so far as possible, these twilight glimmerings. The facts are undeniable. It is a question of judging them with precision. It must be our aim, before all, to bring together what has been proved experimentally, leaving no doubt as to the reality of these proofs.

There is a tendency to believe that science must explain all, and that a well-balanced process of reasoning cannot admit the authenticity of that which is inexplicable. Let us repeat that this is a grave error. Every case deserves to be examined; observations are the very groundwork of science. Explanations, theories, are only hypothesis. Our inability to explain a fact does not diminish its value in the least.

Telepathy, the communication of thought at a distance, has not yet found an explanation that is plausible, certain, definitive; and men who are not devoid of intelligence continue to deny it absolutely, simply because it is unexplained. But it is enlightening to know these facts, despite their mystery.

There are various degrees of probability. Our scientific method is rigorous. Let us take an example.

Anyone might have read, in the Italian newspapers, of the following occurrence, — notably in “La Tribuna” of Rome, of December 26, 1911:

The morning of December 24th, in Parma, a child of eight — the son of Captain Marcucci, who recently left for Tripoli — awakened with a start, wailing and sobbing. In answer to his mother’s question the child said: “I just saw Papa, marching against the Turks, at the head of his soldiers. One of the Turks, hidden behind a tree, fired at him and killed him.” Now a telegram arrived from Tobrouk, announcing Captain Marcucci’s death; he had been killed, as the child had seen, by a man hidden behind a tree.

Must we affirm in this case that there was telepathic transmission from the father to his child?

The chief objection to this story, as to other similar ones, is that there may have been only a chance coincidence; we have, very often, dreams and varied painful presentiment; without any apparent reason; for one that is coincidental, ten have no validity. The child, one might suppose, heard stories of battles, of various skirmishes, and knew that his father was in danger. There is nothing surprising in his having had this dream. We do not, therefore, see in this any *certain* telepathic manifestation. Our duty is to reason coolly.

But — let us repeat it once more — if blind credulity is deplorable, systematic incredulity and skepticism are no less opposed to the onward march of progress. *In medio stat virtus*. Let us analyze these further examples:

The head of a hospital in Algeria, who has asked me not to give his name, but whose letter I have, told me

of two occurrences of this nature, which he himself observed.

He was nineteen years old and was living, with his mother, in the city of Constantine. One night his mother was awakened by a blow struck upon the door of her room. She went to ask who was there, when *the voice of a cousin*, living in France, told her: "Don't be frightened. I am dead. Keep everything you have. Have prayers said for me, and pray for me yourself."

Some days afterward they received a letter telling them of this relative's death. A lawsuit concerning the payment of interest came near being fought out between them and the cousin's son. But all was arranged amicably.

All of us feel that there was in this case greater probability of a telepathic manifestation than in the preceding one.

Can this coincidence be considered as fortuitous and meaningless? The lady did not know that her relative was ill. It was the telepathic transmission that told her of the fact.

Here is the second occurrence related by this correspondent.

One of her aunts underwent, in Algiers on April 13th, a serious operation which, considered merely as an operation, was successful. On the twelfth, the day before, this lady had expressed a desire to be buried in Bone if she should succumb. Her parents lived there, and could therefore go to visit her tomb now and again.

On the twenty-fourth a cure seemed certain. Nevertheless, on that day, she said to the wife of my correspondent: "I have just seen my burial. They took me down into a room, then they carried me to the railroad station, and the train bore me to Bone, where the whole town followed my funeral procession."

This prevision, which called forth jests, was realized exactly. The poor woman died *on the next day*, the twenty-fifth, killed by an obstruction of the arteries. One hour after her death she was taken down into a special room, made ready to receive her; then the coffin was carried to the station, and the train bore it to the city indicated, where the funeral took place.

Yes, we feel that there are degrees in the scale of probability. Strictly speaking, however, we might suppose that the patient had an exact presentiment of her condition, and foresaw the fulfillment of her wish. Let us investigate and discuss everything; light will appear. We must not hide any objection.

Another correspondent wrote me from La Vendée:

During the night of January 30th-31st I dreamed that I arrived at the home of my parents, in Moutiers; I believed them absolutely well. But in the drawing-room I saw a throng bent over an improvised bed; I pushed my way past the people about the bed, and saw my father, dead, stretched out on a mattress placed upon boards.

I sobbed, and this awoke my wife. She asked me what the matter was. "It's nothing," I answered. "It was an absurd dream: I thought Father was dead."

The next day I learned that my father had felt unwell the previous night, at eleven o'clock, and that his condition had grown worse so rapidly that he had died at half-past five o'clock in the morning, at exactly the moment when I had had this sinister nightmare: they had laid him out on a bed like the one I had seen in my dream, and in the same drawing-room.

Plainly, in this case we can discover no possible chance coincidence. Probability approaches certainty.

Our conclusion is that people have been wrong to neglect all these observed phenomena. It is time to discuss them.

They are not of the present.

Recently, that I might vary my pleasures, I found entertainment in opening a volume of the Letters of Madame de Sevigne to her daughter, and I came upon the following passage, written on October 28, 1671:

I always await Thursdays with impatience Those are the days of your letters [from her daughter, Madame de Grignan]. In earlier days Saint-Pavin made an epigram on the subject of Thursdays, the days on which he saw me at the abbot's home.

One may read the note appended to this letter by Aimé-Martin:

Boileau had judged it impossible for the poet Saint-Pavin ever to become pious. He was converted, it is said, as the result of a vision. The same night on which Théophile, his physician and friend died, *he heard himself called several times*. Since his servant assured him that he had heard the same voice, Saint-Pavin renounced his impious opinions and grew devout.

We can no longer ignore what such occurrences teach us. This second volume is full of them; it might be

ten times as long. Let us repeat it: there are things which are at once inexplicable and admissible. Let us keep our independence of mind and observe unimpeded by reticence.

We are astonished by these happenings, great and small, and by these inexplicable coincidences.

But could there be astonishment greater than that which would overwhelm a man who, ignorant of the phenomenon, should see, without preparation, an egg, placed in a warm receptacle, break under the thrusts of the bird which comes out of it?

There are to be found here, under the heading of "Manifestations of the Dying," a certain number of letters which I have received since the beginning of my investigation in 1899. I did not publish them in "L'Inconnu," lest I fill that volume too full (it was already rather long) and because I wished, at the very outset, to place before my readers' eyes the documents best substantiated, and to omit those sent by people whose signatures I was asked not to make public.

Since the end of the last century the authenticity of such phenomena has been established, and we can be less exacting — remaining, however, extremely circumspect — and make them known even when observers insist on anonymity.

These psychophysical transmissions occur with great frequency; they have been observed more or less everywhere, but are not yet known, — are doubted, are denied!

I shall begin this chapter on manifestations of the dying with a reminiscence of our kindly and famous contemporary of the nineteenth century, Alexandre Dumas (the father), a worthy and splendid man, with whom I had occasional intercourse from 1865 to 1870, the year of his death. This reminiscence was published in Volume I of his Memoirs.

General Dumas, his father, died in Villers-Cotterets, on February 26, 1806, and this date interested me because it coincides with that of my birth (February 26th), thirty-six years later. Our delightful author adored his father, who had held him on his knees and shown him great sabers and pretty gold lace, but he had scarcely known him, since he was born on July 24, 1802, also in Villers-Cotterets. This childhood intimacy had not lasted for long, but had left memories that could never be effaced. Death, in sundering the tie, was characterized by a singular phenomenon, which deeply impressed the future writer, and stamped itself upon his imagination. Let us read his story:

The night of my father's death I was taken away from the house and left with my cousin Marianne, who lived at her father's home, in the rue de Soissons. Whether, feeling the end was near, they did not wish me, a child, to see a coffin, or whether they feared I might be in the way, this precaution was taken about five o'clock in the afternoon.

I adored my father. Perhaps at that age the sentiment I now call love was but ingenuous astonishment due to the Herculean form and the tremendous strength I had seen him exhibit on several occasions; perhaps, even, it was but a childish and vain admiration for his embroidered coat, his three-colored aigrette, and his great saber, which I was barely able to lift; but, at all events, the memory of my father — every contour of his body, every feature of his countenance — is as vivid as though I had lost him yesterday. I love him to-day with a love as tender, as deep, and as real as if he had watched over my childhood, and I had had the happiness of passing from this childhood to adolescence, leaning on his strong arm. For his part, my father adored me; I cannot repeat this too often, above all if the dead hear what I said of them; and although, during the last part of his life, suffering had soured his disposition to such an extent that he could not bear any sound or movement in his room, he made an exception in my favor.

I had no conception of death. It would have been most difficult for me to foresee that of my father — I, who three days before had seen him mount a horse. I made no objection, therefore, to leaving the house, and once I had left, I do not know if my father spoke of me or asked for me. But the occurrence I am about to relate has remained perfectly fresh in my mind in every detail.

They had, therefore, left me at the home of my cousins' father. This worthy fellow was a blacksmith named Fortier; he had a brother, the village priest.

I was put in the care of my cousin Marianne.

The house extended from the rue de Soissons to the Place du Château. As a result of this location, the moment the smithy door, giving on the rue de Soissons, and the door of the garden, giving on the Place du Château, had been closed, the house could not be entered except by sealing the walls. (A plan, drawn by Dumas, completes this description.)

So I had remained with my Cousin Marianne; I loved to go into the smithy; I made fireworks there with filings, and the workmen told me most interesting stories.

I stayed in the smithy until, rather late in the evening; at night it was full of fantastic reflections and plays of light and shadow which gave me infinite pleasure. About eight o'clock my cousin Marianne came to look for me there, put me to bed in the little bed next the big one, and I fell into the good slumber that God gives children, — a slumber like spring dew.

At midnight I was awakened — or rather, my cousin and I were awakened — by *a loud blow struck upon the door*. A night-lamp was burning on a table; by its light I saw my cousin sit up in bed, very much frightened, but she said nothing.

No one could knock at this inner door, since the two other doors were closed.

But I, who today almost tremble as I write these lines — I, on the contrary, felt no fear: I got down from my bed and went toward the door.

“Where are you going, Alexandre?” my cousin called to me. “Where are you going, anyway see very well,” I answered calmly, “that I’m going to open the door for Papa, who’s come to say good-by to us.”

The poor girl sprang from her bed, quite terrified, caught me as I was raising my hand to the lock, and forcibly put me back into bed.

I struggled in her arms, shouting at the top of my lungs: “Good-by, Papa! Good-by, Papa!”

Something resembling the exhalation of a last breath touched my face and calmed me.

Nevertheless, I went back to sleep with my eyes full of tears and sobs in my throat.

The next morning we were awakened when day came.

My father had died at precisely the time at which this loud blow, of which I have spoken, had been struck upon the door!

Then I heard these words, without knowing what lips uttered them: “*My poor child, your papa, who loved you so, is dead!*”

“My papa is dead,” I answered. “What does that mean?”

“That means that you will never see him again.”

“What? I’ll never see Papa again?”

“No.”

“And, why shall I never see him again?”

“Because God has taken him from you.”

“Forever?”

“And you say I’ll never see him again?”

“Never again.”

“Never again, ever?”

“Never!”

“And where does God live?”

“He lives in the sky.”

I remained thoughtful for a moment. However much a child I was, however lacking in the power to reason, I understood, nevertheless, that something calamitous had occurred in my life. Then, seizing the first instant when people stopped paying attention to me, I escaped from my uncle’s home and ran straight to that of my mother.

All the doors were open, all faces frightened; one felt that death was there. I entered, therefore, without anyone seeing me. I reached a little room where arms were stored; I took down a single-barreled gun which belonged to my father, and which they had often promised to give me when I should be grown up.

Then, armed with this gun, I went upstairs.

On the landing of the first floor I met my mother. She was coming out of the death-chamber. She was in tears.

“Where are you going?” she asked, astonished to see me there, when she had thought I was with my uncle.

“I’m going to the sky!” I answered.

“What do you mean? You’re going to the sky?”

“Yes; let me go on.”

“And what are you going to do in the sky, my poor child?”

“I’m going to kill God, who killed Papa.”

My mother seized me in her arms, and, squeezing as though she meant to suffocate me, “Oh, don’t say such things, my child!” she cried. “We’re unfortunate enough already!”

Such is the story of how Alexandre Dumas’s father manifested himself to his son, as the son told it. Dumas was a great writer of romances, a clever story-teller, but no man of sensibility can suppose that this account is not authentic; that it was merely a product of the famous writer’s imagination: the veneration which he felt for the father whom he adored, leaves no room for doubt in our minds. All those who knew him appreciated the frankness and integrity of his character. The literary form which he gave to the wording of his story does not diminish its reality.

Of what nature was this loud blow struck upon the door? Its actuality cannot be doubted; our readers have been familiarized with this strange variety of manifestation through the special chapter previously devoted to it. What connection is there between these blows and the brain or the soul of the dead? As we found above, one thinks of electric transmissions. But we must admit that in the present state of our knowledge an explanation is impossible.

The facts are none the less real and unquestionable.

In the case last given we are concerned with a manifestation coinciding with a death. The difficulty which arises is that of knowing at what moment it was produced, — shortly before or shortly after death. It was an ether-vibration, at once of a psychic and physical nature; it was heard by Marianne, the cousin, and by the child. Everything leads us to believe that it was not intentional, not produced by the will, as with apparitions, voices heard, advice given; that, in consequence, it was neither before nor after death that General Dumas’s thought produced it, but that it coincided with *the very moment* of the soul’s separation, as though it resulted mechanically.

In Volume V of the same work Alexandre Dumas relates another experience not less disturbing.

It concerned a certain Monsieur Villenave, a very aged bibliophile whom he knew. He had gone to call on him, to investigate an autograph, in March, 1829, about five o’clock in the afternoon, — that is to say, at nightfall. When he passed the concierge, the latter gave him a letter, to avoid mounting two flights of stairs. This letter announced to Monsieur Villenave the death of an old and very dear friend; he had been mysteriously warned of it by the falling of her portrait, a fine drawing, carefully hung on the wall of his room. The famous writer adds:

This extraordinary incident made me remember my father’s apparition, which, the very night of his death, had awakened me, as a child, and again I asked myself, without being able to find an answer, this question, so many times repeated: “By what mysterious ties is death joined to life?”

After that, when I lost my mother, whom I loved more than anything in the world, and who for her part adored me more than words can express, I remembered these two manifestations. Near the bed on which she had just died, kneeling, my lips against her hand, I begged her, if some part of her survived, to appear to me one last time; then, when night had come, I went to bed in an isolated room, awaiting, with palpitating heart, the beloved vision.

Unavoidably, I heard the clock strike almost all the hours of the night, but no noise, no apparition came to comfort me in my funereal vigil. Then I doubted myself and others, for I so loved my mother, and she loved me so, that if she could have risen from her bed one last time to bid me a last farewell, she would most certainly have done this.⁶⁵

Perhaps only children and old people are privileged, — children, because they are nearer the cradle; old people, because they are nearer the tomb.

Let us, for our personal enlightenment, consider all occurrences, even those which are contradictory.

We may note that the falling of a portrait, coinciding with death, is not very rare. I have among my papers a large number of absolutely similar accounts, — the falling of portraits, at the moment of deaths, which could not be attributed to the method of hanging.

One of these examples was brought to my notice, still more recently, by a truthful and sincere correspondent, with whom my readers are already familiar, Mademoiselle Vera Kunzler of Naples (See Volume I, page 245). On October 27, 1920, she sent me the following account:

⁶⁵ All have had opportunity to note that these manifestations do not occur when one desires them most; this shows us that they are not cases of autosuggestion. Then, too, a brain expectant of a phenomenon of this sort seems to lose all aptitude in perceiving it. These manifestations are essentially *spontaneous*. We must realize this; let us not forget it.

At the beginning of the year 1917 my aunt, Madame Pauline Riesbeck, had a husband in the army, but, since he was over forty, they thought that he was in the rear line of battle, and, in consequence, she was not anxious about him. The morning of February 12th my aunt went into her room, about half-past ten, to look for something. At the exact moment when she stepped over the threshold of the door the portrait of her husband, a large one which showed him in military costume, detached itself from the wall, fell, and slid over the floor to her feet. When the nail and the cord which had held up the frame were examined, they were found to be intact. My aunt, very much struck, related this singular accident to some friends, adding that she was very much afraid that some misfortune had befallen her husband. Naturally, they said to her what they habitually do in such cases: "Heavens, Madame, are you going to be superstitious? Don't believe in that foolishness!" But my aunt, convinced that a misfortune had occurred, put a cross, in red, against this date on her calendar, and waited three weeks for news of her husband. Toward the beginning of March she learned that my uncle, Monsieur Adolphe Riesbeck, had died on the "field of honor" (as they say) from a bullet that struck him in the head, the morning of February 12th, about half-past ten.

Vera Kunzler

(Letter 4291)

P. S. Although you are familiar with such occurrences, my dear Master, and trust my word, I have asked my aunt, now in Naples, to confirm my story. Here is her autograph:

I certify to the absolute exactitude of the above account.

Pauline Riesbeck,

Rue Liotard, Geneva.

Manifestations of the dying take on the strangest forms. Here is an account of a manifestation, which was sent me from Brussels on May 12th, 1900, in the following letter, given verbatim:

I think it my duty to add to your collection of documents the account of an incident which I witnessed. Though it happened long ago, it is still so vivid in my memory that I have often repeated it to my wife and children.

In Liege, on April 11, 1852, my brother, my family, and I were seated around the table one evening, playing cards beneath the gas-jet, when suddenly the flame went out.

All were astonished. Had some one tampered with the meter? No, for the gas continued to burn in the adjoining rooms. The jet was lighted again without difficulty, but we then saw that my father was very pale; we heard him stammer, "I have a presentiment that my mother has just died." We vainly made fun of such a groundless idea; we made no impression on him.

My father's restlessness ended by infecting us all, and a telegram soon arrived from Maestricht, thirty kilometers from Liege, announcing the fatal news.

Being neither superstitious nor skeptical, I submit the facts in all simplicity, and in the interests of truth alone.

E. Michell

26 rue du Nord, Brussels.

(Letter 916)

The flame of the gas-jet extinguished at the moment of a death and this unquestionably, before an entire family — is it not childish, ridiculous Is it unbelievable that a psychic current caused this? Here is the phenomenon of a watch stopped:

I received from Dr. Weil, a rabbi in Strasburg, the following account of three occurrences which took place in Bischheim, in a most reputable family — a Protestant family; he guarantees the truthfulness of its members; they are in no way mystical, and "most conservative in their religious ideas." They prefer that their names should not be made public. This account was written by a student.

My grandmother died in 1913. At the hour of her death the clock which hung in her room stopped, and no one could make it go again. Some years afterward her son died, and the very day of his death the clock again began to go without anyone having touched it.

At the time of this lady's death one of her sons was living in America. He returned at once to Alsace and asked, upon his arrival, if his mother were still alive. When they answered in the negative, he related that on February 9th he had awakened during the night and had seen his mother standing beside his bed. "She beckoned to me. I rose, followed her through three rooms, and ended by calling out to her. At that very moment she disappeared, and the clock struck quarter to two. The next day I left for Alsace, for I was sure she had died." It was, indeed, on that very day and at that very hour that death had occurred.

(Letter 4201)

Assuredly, it is strange that the spirit of someone dying or dead should be able to stop a clock or start it again. How can it act on the spring? Nevertheless we have seen above (page 268) that lightning does this. To attribute such coincidences to chance hardly satisfies us in view of the number of these concordant occurrences. We have here, besides, a case of an apparition announcing death.

A most distinguished woman of the world, who was a close observer, wrote me in April, 1900:

The two incidents which I am about to relate to you are in dubitable, but I am bringing them to your attention, dear Master, only on one condition, which you will understand and pardon — that of publishing neither my name nor the names of the others; people are too stupid, and know only how to make fun of everything.

One day a young girl came to give me news of her married sister, who was living at a distance, and was ill of typhoid fever.

My daughter and I, as we were walking along with her, stopped to talk beneath the bell at the entrance to my apartment. There was no one with us, neither in my entrance-hall, nor anywhere else. Suddenly the bell began to ring as though it were tolling. “Léontine,” I said to the young girl, “your sister’s dying; that’s her good-by.” In the course of the day I received a telegram announcing her death.

I must tell you of a sister of charity who related this: She had a friend who had promised to let her know when she died. One day, when the sister was in the linen-room, she heard a cry: “Sister Cécile! Sister Cécile!” She saw no one. The same was twice repeated. The third time the voice added, “It’s I; I’m going away, and I’ve come to tell you so.”

A month later Sister Cécile learned that her friend had died on the day and at the hour when she had heard herself called.

(Letter 888)

These two cases are similar to those above: page 246 (Saint François de Sales’s clock) and page 280 (Victor Hugo’s neighbor in the Place des Vosges).

I received in July, 1919, from my friend Dr. Ostwalt, a physician and oculist in Ivy, the following communication with a request not to reawaken the grief of a sorrowing family by publishing the narrator’s name. It concerned the mother of a family and her son H—, killed in the last war. Here is this mother’s letter:

You have asked me to tell you of the mysterious occurrence coinciding with the death of my brave, sweet child. Here it is, in its distressing simplicity.

On June 16, 1915, I was awakened by hearing three blows, very sharp and resonant, struck upon my door, and I answered, “Come in!” believing that it was my chamber-maid, who serves me breakfast, habitually, toward seven o’clock. The astonishment which I felt when I did not see the door open, subsided immediately. Sitting up in bed, I said to my husband (he had heard me say, “Come in,” and had entered and looked at his watch, the hands of which stood at five minutes to six): “*It’s strange; I’ve just had an auditory hallucination, — three blows struck on my door, — but they were so quick and vigorous that they remind me of our Henri. It seems to me that it’s he saying to me: ‘Dearest Mother, I implore you not to be alarmed; I’m changing my sector. I’m happy; everything’s all right, but I’m leaving.’*”

It was a strange feeling, and it made a deep impression on me.

My son was with the one hundred and forty-eighth infantry regiment; an attack was imminent in the direction of the tragic plateau of Quennevière (in the Compiègne district); we feared it, and nevertheless I was confident and serene. Alas! On the twenty-third of June, a professor in the college to which my son had gone brought us heartrending news. It had been sent by a college friend of Henri, a lieutenant who was near our poor child when he was struck in the temple by a fragment of a shell which exploded above him. His death was instantaneous; it took place at the moment when the assault was beginning: at five minutes to six.

I am sending you a copy of his friend’s saddening letter, telling of the battle and of his death at precisely that time.

(Letter 4093)

It seems unlikely that this auditory impression of a mother who believed she heard her son (as well as the blows struck upon the door) was produced by this young soldier before he was killed by the fragment of a shell. The transmission must have corresponded to the very moment of death. We have seen in the preceding pages a great number of them which *antedated* death; we shall have (in Volume III) examples of those following death. The one just given must have corresponded to the very moment of dissolution.

One can see how much our classification helps us to know where we stand.

In the preceding narration a mother learned of her son’s death. In that about to be read a girl felt, at a

distance, in a strange nightmare, the death of her mother; the death-agony was occurring a hundred kilometers away. A letter sent to me from Lourdes, on June 11, 1920, related the following:

My mother was warned of the death of her own mother. The latter lived with one of her daughters, in Arlos, a little village of Haute-Garonne, not far from the Spanish frontier of the Val d'Aran. The author of "Stella" must, doubtless, be familiar with this delightful country.

My mother was living in Lourdes, at a distance of about a hundred kilometers from Arlos.

One night in October, 1918, my mother was suddenly awakened from her first sleep. Not only did she feel the presence of some one, but she had the very distinct sensation that some hand not her own seized her by the wrist and gripped it very strongly; at the same time a loud cracking sound made itself heard; it seemed to come from the vicinity of the door. My mother awakened my father at once, told him of her nightmare, and confided her uneasiness as to my grandmother, who she knew had been weak for some days. She went back to sleep, but her slumbers were very, broken and agitated the whole night long. She had constantly the same dream, — a vision of tapers burning around a coffin.

My grandmother, whose death agony had commenced at the beginning of the night, doubtless at the moment when my mother felt her wrist grasped, died that same day, at dawn. My mother felt no surprise when she received, about ten o'clock, the distressing telegram. All that day she had the feeling that her wrist being strongly gripped. Speaking to me of the cracking (allusion is made to this sort of phenomena in several documents which you have published), she told me that she had a very strong impression that it was a warning.

My mother was brought up in the midst of the simple customs of a very religious, very devout family of peasants.

Pierre Proubet

Lourdes

(Letter 4159)

This subjective telepathic impression is no more to be doubted than the preceding ones or the two following. They simply confirm the fact that these most diverse manifestations are unquestionable. The accounts were sent me from Montpellier, on August 6, 1900, in this letter:

It is a duty for all honest, fair-minded persons to tell you what they know, that they may help your most courageous investigation. The authenticity of the two following experiences cannot be questioned. The first I had from a person absolutely worthy of trust; the second occurred in my family.

(A) Madame Belot is a woman of eighty; her life has been irreproachable.

For a long time she and her husband lived apart; both were too independent by nature; they had neither the same ideas nor the same tastes. They did not detest each other. Their household was rather informal; the husband, something of an adventurer, decided to go and settle in Algeria. Before leaving his wife, he said this to her: "I'm leaving, but rest assured that I will not forget you, and if I go to the grave before you, my last thought will be of you."

One day, after luncheon, Madame Belot was taking her usual siesta. She was sleeping lightly, when, toward four o'clock in the after noon, it seemed to her that she saw her husband, who passed before her, saying: "Good-by. I am going away."

This apparition startled her into wakefulness. She was greatly terrified; she had clearly recognized her husband's face, despite his pale, emaciated features. She thought of this constantly, and believed that an accident had happened to him.

The next day she received a telegram announcing that he had died the day before, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

(B) My poor father was very ill; to dull his torturing pain, injections of morphine had been prescribed. Half an hour before he died, not being able to bear his terrible suffering, he himself got up and went over to the mantelpiece on which the bottle of morphine was, to give himself an injection. He then went back to bed, and expired at ten o'clock. (This took place in Foix.)

His sister, who was in Toulouse; was informed by a telegram and arrived the next day. Before my mother had spoken to him; she said: "I dreamed it. Last night I had gone to bed early; I went to sleep at once, and saw him crossing to the mantelpiece. The vision awakened me suddenly; it was about ten o'clock."

I assure you, my dear Master, that the authenticity of these two incidents is unquestionable.

Henri Silvy

Montpellier

(Letter 933)

The following is an affecting case of a manifestation on the part of someone dying; an account of it was sent to Monsieur de Vesme, in December, 1919; it was an auditory manifestation. The writer is the physician of the heroine of this telepathic phenomenon.⁶⁶

In February, 1904, Monsieur B—, aged thirty-one, became engaged to Mademoiselle D—. These two young people loved each other. Family differences soon jeopardized their plans, and a summer of such importance that the marriage, which was to have taken place in the middle of May, was broken off on the fourth of that month. Heartbroken, the two young people parted and began to travel, that they might try to lessen their sorrow. Mademoiselle B— thought daily of her fiancé, whom she hoped to be able to marry some day, when family difficulties should have ceased to exist.

In September, 1904, she received a letter from her former fiancé. It was the last which reached her.

In December, 1905, she learned that, yielding to the entreaties of his family, he had married. She herself, for her part, married on July 5, 1906, and went to live with her husband on an estate in the environs of Bordeaux.

Monsieur B—, though married, could not forget his former fiancée.

In March, 1907, the young woman was alone, her husband being on a trip.

One night (it was the seventeenth) she had gone to bed as usual. She awakened abruptly, about two o'clock in the morning; she had heard her given name called three times, — close to her, it seemed. It appeared to her that this given name had been uttered behind the door which was beside her bed, and gave on a hallway. She rose, opened the door, believing her husband had come back unexpectedly, and was greatly astonished to see no one. Asking herself who could have called her, she went to wake her chamber-maid, who was sleeping in an adjoining room. The maid had heard nothing. Both of them dressed, went over the whole house, and found nothing. They ended by going back to bed.

After some time Madame D— dozed off. But again she heard her given name twice uttered in a voice full of anguish. Greatly agitated, she leaped from her bed precipitately, called her chamber-maid, and told her: "This time it's impossible that you didn't hear it; someone called out twice, 'Jeanne! Jeanne!'" The servant answered that she had heard nothing; that, since she had not been asleep, she would certainly have heard if anyone had called. Both, intensely curious, explored the whole house once more, and found nothing.

Madame B— went back to bed a second time, sent her maid away, and, not being able to sleep again, remained in a state of mind that may be easily understood.

Half an hour later, she heard herself called for the third time, in a tone still more anguished than on the two preceding occasions. She spent the rest of the night in great agitation.

Some days afterward one of her relatives arrived from Noyon, where her former fiancé lived, and told her that the latter had died of galloping consumption on the night of March 17th—18th. His end had been particularly tragic. He had died the victim of most violent dyspnoea, and in the course of his death-agony had several times called his former fiancée — "Jeanne!" — as he was expiring in his wife's arms.

How can we doubt, when we see these manifestations pile up before us by the hundred? No physical or historical science is founded on more numerous concordant observations.

The following account might, apparently, be classed with apparitions of the dead occurring after a long period, but we must inquire into it. It was given in Myers's work ("Human Personality," Volume II, page 32), and was a communication from Miss Lucy Dodson.

On Sunday, June 5, 1887, between eleven o'clock and midnight, the narrator, then wide awake, heard her name called three times, and at once saw her mother appear; she had been dead for sixteen years. She was carrying two children in her arms; she held them out, saying, "Take care of them, for they have just lost their mother."

The day following the next, Miss Dodson learned that her sister-in-law had died as a result of confinement, three weeks after having given birth to her second child. It is to be noted that the two children whom she had seen in the arms of her mother seemed to her to be of the same age as her sister-in-law's children, — to be noted, also, that she knew nothing of the latter's confinement.

The investigation made demonstrated that this apparition of someone dead was absolutely spontaneous, and that nothing in the narrator's own mind could have given rise to Miss Dodson was in England and her sister in law in Bruges.

Must we consider this incident as proving an authentic apparition on the part of a mother who had been dead for sixteen years? We cannot be sure of this; it is not even probable, and I dare not hold the case in reserve for our third volume for it may have been nothing but a thought-transmission of the dying woman, together with an

⁶⁶ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1919, p. 107.

association of ideas. Since this vision coincided with the death of the sick woman, we may imagine that the latter thought of her children's future, of her sister-in-law, and even of the dead woman.

The vision and the hearing of the words occurred between eleven o'clock and midnight; death took place on the same day, — Sunday, June 5th about half-past nine in the evening; that is to say, about two hours previously.

We must not fail to note the association of Miss Dodson's mother with the sister-in-law's suggestion. It reminds us of other similar observations. Did we not see, in Volume I, General Touchskoff's death announced to his wife by his father, who himself was unaware of the phenomenon?

We shall return to these remarkable cases.

We are now within the realm of sentiment. The touching story which follows was recounted to me by a young member of the Astronomical Society of France; he was the percipient, and was most painfully affected. His letter is here given word for word. We find in it three kinds of manifestations: (1) The words "It is ended," heard subjectively; (2) loud noises within a fireplace; (3) a mysterious noise. Three independent witnesses had these impressions.

My Dear Master:

Your disciples hail you as a psychism as well as an astronomer, and since it appears to be your mission to prove the existence of the soul and its survival after death, I believe it my duty to confide the following:

I The first days of last April I learned to know a young girl of my own age (eighteen); she made an indefinable impression upon me, casting a vague sadness over me, which I tried vainly to dispel. I saw her, now and again, in the evening, never for more than thirty to thirty-five minutes, save on April 15th, from seven to eight o'clock, in Buttes-Chaumont. It was a marvelous spring evening; we strolled along slowly. Suddenly, for no reason, we began to talk of death; I pointed to the stars and spoke of the soul, of its survival after death, of its progressive evolution in "the worlds of the sky," as well as other topics of the far side of the grave. Our walk ended in this way.

The next day she took to her bed, since she showed symptoms of typhoid fever; her condition necessitated her being taken to the hospital, where I found her unconscious. Each day I had the grief of learning of the malady's progress, and the dreaded catastrophe came on May 6th, at a quarter-past one. The blow stunned me; I am barely beginning to emerge from the torpor into which I fell.

The night of May 5th-6th, I half awakened, and I had an *impression* which may be put into the following words: "It is ended." I wished to get up, to note the time, but I went back to sleep suddenly, — a leaden sleep caused by the nervous reaction of the day's anxiety. The period of this *semi-wakefulness* was very short; I might even estimate it as four or five seconds. I am extremely sorry that I did not get up, to look at the time; however that may be, it was black night. At five o'clock I awakened. I rose hastily; I hurried to the hospital, where I learned what had happened. She had remained for several hours in a state of coma.

II My poor Marcelle's father, aged sixty-eight, who knew nothing of things psychic — indeed was quite incredulous on the subject — had, on the fifth, gone to bed as unhappy as on the preceding days, without, however, thinking that his daughter was about to die. He awakened, on the sixth, *at dawn*, about four o'clock, and, scarcely awake, heard five very loud blows struck in the fireplace; at the same time the metal fender was violent shaken. Indignant that anyone should make such a noise at hour so early, he spoke this thought aloud, and went that morning to ask all his neighbors about it. They had heard nothing. It was only in the afternoon that he was told of the death of his daughter.

III My friend's brother, living in Marly-le-Roi, was awakened about midnight, by a prolonged metallic noise; he got up to look for the cause of it, and found nothing.

Not being an authority, I am unable to discuss the question of how these phenomena were produced; I confine myself merely to giving you an account of them, as I perceived them and as they were recounted to me, — an unembellished account, without additions or omissions.

René Johany Delestre

Paris, June 21, 1914, the day of your Sun Festival, this evening, at the Eiffel Tower

(Letter 2499)

We have here, before our eyes, a really touching idyl. This young girl of eighteen had a presentiment of her approaching end, without suspecting it. A lovers' stroll, rare in its poetry, had led them to speak of death. She fell ill the next day, and died three weeks afterward. Her death was felt by her young friend, toward the time it occurred, and then by her father. Her brother was startled by an inexplicable noise, shortly before that, while she was in a state of coma. A refusal to acknowledge the validity of these bits of testimony would be inexcusable. They must be added to hundred of others.

The narrator was a young observer, a well-balanced student of science. (The infamous war of 1914-18 took his life, alas, as it did that of so many others, on September 25, 1915).

And what of the strange noises heard at the moment of death; blows struck in the fireplace, a fender shaken, — occurrences like the ringing of the bells of Etampes, given above, Alexandre Dumas's doors, etc. There are thousands of similar examples. What opinion must a man familiar with these facts have of the intellectual worth of those blind enough to deny them?⁶⁷

A father, on shipboard, at sea, was kissed by his child, who was dying in France. Monsieur Moureau, the commanding officer of a war-vessel, gave the following account to the "*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*"⁶⁸:

On January 23, 1893, the training-ship *Iphigénie*, then on a cruise of instruction, was off the Antilles, making its way toward France.

Since I had to take the watch from four o'clock until eight o'clock in the morning, I went to my cabin about eleven at night and closed the door. Scarcely had I turned out the light and fallen into that state of semi-consciousness which precedes sleep, when I felt on my chest a sensation of weight, and the tactile impression of a little human body. It was as if it had come to rest there suddenly, without any previous effort — apparent rue — of slipping into my bunk, which was raised above the floor. Space is very much economized in a war-ship's cabin, and the little bed was installed on a chest, or linen-cupboard, of considerable height. Together with the sensation of contact and oppression of the lungs, I had a very distinct impression that two little arms were about my neck, and that a mouth was kissing mine.

Amazed, I seized the body with both hands and thrust it away abruptly.

In spite of the many years which have passed since then, the remains with me the memory of a distinct sensation of a weight lifted. I struck a match quickly and held it to the candle, which was placed within my immediate reach. The flame flared out at once, and I discovered that the wax had not yet congealed. I threw myself from my bunk, and hastily explored my little room. I was the only living person in the cabin.

It then occurred to me that I had heard neither the sound of body falling to the floor, nor the noise which the door would have made in closing.

The next day, at breakfast, I confided my adventure to a comrade who had been promoted when I was, an intimate friend who sat next to me at table in the officers' room. Although he was, in general, very skeptical, this fellow-officer admitted to me that my narration had impressed him by its precision.

In the port of Gibraltar, letters informed me that my little boy, who was barely two years old, had had an attack of croup, and had died, in Paris, on the very day on which I had been given a kiss in my solitary cabin.

After having made a careful reckoning of the time, taking into account the longitude in which I was sailing at the moment, I ascertained that the hour of death coincided exactly with that of the tactile hallucination.

On my arrival in Toulon I found my family in deep mourning.

"If anything," they said to me, "can lessen our cruel sorrow, it is the knowledge that our child, attacked by diphtheria, died from embolic at the very moment when he was kissing your photograph. He stammered, "Papa... boat... on the water!"

F. M. Moureau

Commanding Officer

Rouen, November 1, 1916

You see, dear readers, how our precise data are accumulating.

Dr. Liébault, the eminent Nancy physician, has made known the following manifestation, which occurred at the very hour of death.⁶⁹ He had under his charge a certain Mademoiselle B—. He had cured her, by hypnotism, of a nervous cough which she had contracted in Coblenz, where she was a teacher. Let us listen to the doctor:

One day, February 7, 1868, toward eight o'clock in the morning, when she was sitting down to the table for breakfast, she felt an irresistible impulse to write, as a medium. (She had done this for some time.) At once she ran to look for her large note-book, in which she was in the habit of putting down feverishly, in pencil, almost illegible words. She now wrote down words of this sort, arid, at length, when her mental excitement had subsided, they were able to read that a person named Marguerite was announcing her death. They surmised at once that a young woman of this name, who was a friend of Mademoiselle B— and was living, as a teacher, in the school in Coblenz where she had discharged the same duties, had just

⁶⁷ For example, the editors of the *Revue des Lectures*, Jan. 15, 1921; the *Revue du Clergé Français*, of July 15, 1920.

⁶⁸ Of 1919, p. 71.

⁶⁹ Darioux, *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1891, p. 26.

died there. Mademoiselle B—'s entire family came to my home at once, and we decided to find out, that very day, if this death had really taken place. Mademoiselle B— wrote to an English girl, a friend of hers, who was also performing the duties of a teacher in the same school. She gave some reason or other as a pretext, taking care not to reveal her real reason. By the next mail we received a reply in English. They made me a copy of passages which were essential. The reply expressed the English girl's astonishment at Mademoiselle B—'s letter, a letter which she had not expected. But she also announced to our medium that their mutual friend Marguerite had died on February 7th, toward eight o'clock in the morning. In addition to this a little square of printed paper had been inserted in the letter: it was a circular announcing her death. I need not tell you that I examined the envelop of this letter, and that the latter seemed to me really to have come from Coblenz.

Dr. A. Liebault

Who announced the death in this spontaneous, mediumistic writing? Was it Marguerite herself. So it would appear, despite the hypothesis of the subconscious, or clairvoyance, and of intuition. What is the explanation of this mediumism? A special work on spiritism will, perhaps, give us the explanation.

Let us continue our investigation:

Colonel Jones of London, a man whose mind is free from all superstition and all ingenuous credulity, sent the authors of "Phantasms of the Living," in 1883, a letter from his father, written a short time after the following experience:

In 1845 I was with my regiment in Maulmain, Burma. In those days there was no direct mail; sailing-vessels brought us our letters, and months often went by without us receiving any.

The evening of March 24, 1845, I was dining with some other people at the home of a friend. Seated on the veranda after dinner, with the other guests, I was talking of local matters, when suddenly I saw before me, *distinctly*, a coffin, and, stretched out in this coffin with every appearance of being dead, one of my sisters, especially beloved, who was then at home. It goes without saying that I stopped speaking, and every one looked at me questioningly. They asked me what was the matter. Laughingly I told what I had seen and my story was taken as a jest. In the course of the evening, in the company of an officer much older than I (the late Major General George Briggs, retired, of the Madras artillery, at that time Captain Briggs), I went back to where I lived. He returned to the subject, and asked me if I had received news that my sister was ill. I replied in the negative, adding that my latest letters from home were those I had received about three months previously. He asked me to make a note of the vision because he had heard of similar experiences. I did this, making a note of it on a calendar opposite the date. On the seventh of the following May I received a letter telling me that *my sister had died on the very day of the vision.*⁷⁰

Here is the observation of a definite experience. In the midst of a quiet evening, talking of nothing of importance, this officer suddenly saw before him a coffin, and lying in it his sister, whom he particularly loved. It seems that this sister, from whom he had received no news for three months, had died that very day in England. He himself was in Burma. Were we to attribute this coincidence merely to chance, we should really be a bit too simple-minded. In all probability his sister, when dying, thought of her brother with great concentration, and her anguish traversed the distance which separated them. May we go still further, since the coffin was seen, and conclude that she was already in it when her thoughts took shape? I dare not propose the admission of this. Nevertheless, occurrences must be recounted just as they happen.

Let us now examine the following astonishing manifestation on the part of a man who committed suicide. It took place at the moment of his act, which was entirely unforeseen. We are taking it, with all its circumstantial details, from that work so full of evidence, "*Phantasms of the Living.*"⁷¹

Here is the observer's story:

In 1876 I was living in a small agricultural district in the east of England.

A young man, S. B—, was a neighbor of mine. He was living, with his man-servant, at the other end of the village. His house was quite far from my home (about one kilometer), and there were gardens and buildings between. He was not a personal friend of mine, but a mere acquaintance. I was interested in him only as one of the great landowners of the district. Out of courtesy I invited him to come to see me, but, so far as I can remember, I never went to see him.

One afternoon in March, in 1876, as I was leaving the railroad station with my wife, he joined us on the way home, and accompanied us as far as the door. He lingered there for some moments, talking with us, but nothing of importance was said in this conversation.

After he had left us my wife remarked to me, "Evidently young B— wished to be invited in, but I thought you would not care to be disturbed by him." I met him again in the afternoon. To my surprise, he said, "Just come and smoke a cigar at my

⁷⁰ Annales des Sciences psychiques, 1891, p. 173.

⁷¹ I, 222, and *Hallucinations Télépathiques*, p. 299.

house this evening." I answered: "I'm afraid that's not possible. I have an engagement." "Do come along," he insisted. I said "I'll come some other evening." Thereupon we separated. When we were about forty meters apart, he turned toward me, and "Well, since you've decided not to come, good-night!"

I spent the evening writing. After I had gone in it snowed a little, just enough to whiten the earth. At about five minutes to ten I took up a book, and drew near the lamp to read, leaning my shoulder against the inside blinds, a position in which I could perceive the least noise from the outside. Suddenly I heard, distinctly, the large gate in front of the house being opened; it clanged shut again. I then heard quick steps coming along the path. At first these steps were very clear and ringing, but, when they reached the window, the lawn beneath it deadened the sound. At the same moment I had a feeling that something was standing very near me, outside, separated from me only by the thin blinds and the pane of glass. I could hear the short, panting, and painful breathing of the messenger, or whoever it was, striving to get his breath before speaking. Had he been drawn by the light which filtered through the shutters? But suddenly, like a cannon going off, there resounded within, without, everywhere, the most terrible cry, — a lamentation, a long-drawn wail of horror which froze the blood in my veins. It was not just one cry, but a prolonged wail, which began on a very high note, then grew lower and broke into moans. These grew weaker and weaker, and at length sank to sobs and the dreadful sounds of a horrible death-agony.

My wife, in an adjoining room, was seated quietly at her work. She was near a window, on the same side of the house on which I was, and only ten or twelve feet away. She had heard nothing! Perceiving my agitation, she asked me the cause—"There's someone outside," I answered. — "Then why don't you go out, to see? You always do when you hear some unusual noise." I answered, "There is something so strange and so terrible in this noise, that I don't dare face it."

Young S. B—, after having left me, had gone back home. He had spent most of the evening upon a sofa, reading a novel by Whyte Melville. He had seen his servant at nine o'clock, and had given him orders for the next day. The man-servant and his wife, who were the only ones in the house with him, went to bed. At the inquest the servant declared that just as he was going to sleep he had been suddenly awakened by a cry. He had run into his master's room, and had found him expiring upon the floor. They ascertained that the young man had undressed upstairs, and that he had gone into his drawing-room dressed only in his night-clothes and his trousers; he had poured himself half a glass of water, into which he had emptied a bottle of prussic acid (he had secured it that morning, under pretext of poisoning a dog; in reality, he had no dog). He had gone up again, and, after having reentered his room, had emptied the glass, with a cry; he had fallen dead. All this took place, as well as I could gather, at least, at exactly the same moment at which I had been so frightened in my home. It is quite impossible that any noise, — save, perhaps, that of a cannon, — could have reached my ears, considering the distance between the two houses.

Early in the morning of the next day, when I examined the ground below the window, I could find no sign of tracks on the gravel or the lawn; the ground was still covered with the light snowfall of the preceding evening.

The whole incident is a mystery, and will always remain a mystery to me. I learned the details of the tragedy only on the afternoon of the next day. It was said that the motive for the suicide was an unfortunate love-affair.

The narrator's wife added her attestation to that of her husband. A local newspaper published an account of the suicide.

It is quite obvious that this young man who committed suicide manifested himself to his neighbor in the manner told of in this account. Assuredly, we can explain neither this fictitious opening of the gate, nor these steps, not less fictitious, nor the invisible presence of this tragic visitor, nor his apparent breathing, nor this cry and these resounding walls of someone in his death-agony; but the narrator had all these impressions at the moment of the suicide. These were in his brain, *as are; moreover, all our normal impressions, and the dying man caused them.* In this case there was no double, nothing objective.

These observations must from this time on find a place in physiological psychology. To ignore them, to reject them, is to disregard one of the elements of human nature. Here is a further one.

A letter sent from Bessarabia, on July 24, 1900, recounted to me the following:

It was in the month of October; our house was filled with friends; they gave themselves up to amusement, they played roulette during whole nights; it was as though youth were abandoned to a frenzy of pleasure. Among all these people was one of our relatives, Monsieur Michel S—. He was subject to frequent stomach and liver attacks, which endangered his life. Nevertheless, he greatly loved society, and had come to amuse himself like the others, not thinking that he would grow worse, when he had a terrible recurrence of his malady, which obliged him to go to bed that very evening. The young people continued to laugh and to amuse themselves, and gambling absorbed them until dawn. But when laughter and jesting were at their height; *three violent blows*, sounding as though they had come from under the ground, made the whole assembly start; everyone stopped short. Some ran to the entrance-door, believing at first that a late visitor was knocking. The servants, who had also heard the blows, had the same idea, and went as far as the gateway. But they found no one, and everyone, silent, asked himself whence this sinister and inexplicable noise might have come. The next day my cousin died, in the midst of this carnival, to the despair of his mother, who was obliged to take him to their home in a coffin. By a strange coincidence, there was in our house a fine new coffin; it had been our intention to transport my father's ashes in it. This made a wit say that my brother pushed hospitality to the

point of furnishing coffins to those of his guests who might have the misfortune to die in his home.

This sudden death froze every heart, and it was then understood that the three blows were a warning which announced the misfortune! I am telling you of the incident, without comment, for your investigation.

Hélène Schoulgine

Grodno, Russia

(Letter 930)

This account brings forward a case assuredly worthy of our attention. A man felt himself to be dying in a house in which people were seeking amusement. We can fancy him — thinking himself abandoned for the moment by the living — shouting, perhaps, for help, at least in thought. His despair took the form of an intense transmission sent toward his indifferent friends, and produced sonorous blows heard by everyone, therefore physically real. What physical force came into play here? Now that the phenomena of electricity have been investigated, the idea that it was an electric force occurs to us very naturally.

These noises are comparable to that of the door, closed with violence, told of in letter 525 and given on page 170 of “L’Inconnu,” as well as to all the noises recounted above. Let us note that these phenomena usually correspond with tragic deaths.

Madame Camille Selden, Heinrich Heine’s intimate friend, perceived at the moment of the celebrated writer’s death, a singular manifestation, which was carefully analyzed by Monsieur Marcel Baudouin. Here is Madame Selden’s account.⁷²

On that Sunday — February 17, 1856, — I had a strange waking. Toward eight o’clock *I heard a noise* in my room, — a sort of fluttering, such as that produced on summer evenings by the wings of nocturnal butterflies which come in through the open windows and search desperately for an exit.

My eyes opened, but I closed them at once; in the first glimmerings of day *a black form* was writhing, like a gigantic insect, and seeking some way of escape.

A case, therefore, of *hearing* and *sight*, — what is called an auditory hallucination and a visual hallucination, both proceeding from the same cause.

That delightful writer Heinrich Heine — more French than German — died in Paris, on February 17, 1856, between five and eight o’clock in the morning. He was born in Düsseldorf, in December, 1799, but gave the date of his birth as January 1, 1801, styling himself “the first man of the century.” A cruel malady of the spine confined him to his bed during the last eight years of his life. The manifestation of which we have just read impressed Madame Selden; she, hastened to his home, despite the cold, and learned that he had just died. Monsieur Marcel Baudouin adds the following remarks to the account of this experience:

This lady *was a most intimate friend* of Heinrich Heine. She published his reminiscences only in 1884, that is to say, twenty-eight years after the death of her “dear poet,” and after Madame Heine’s death. She knew him only “at the end of his life” (1855-56). On her first visit, made probably in 1855, she found him already confined to the bed on which he died. There grew up between them “a cordiality, an *intellectual tie* which remained always intact and in which commonplace sentiment never had a part. . .”; “There could be no possible misunderstanding. . . ; we could show ourselves as we were, with no fear of appearing in a false light; this added greatly to the charm of our mutual relations. . . , and inspired respect.”

Heine called this young woman “My little Fly,” and addressed her as “tu” (the familiar: “thou”); he treated her as a *relative*.

Professor Flournoy, who, with Flammarion and many other psychologists, accepts the facts of clairvoyance, believes that it is a question of *impressions at a distance produced by a person still living* (at the moment of his death, most frequently) *upon the brain of another person*, with whom there is *elective affinity*. That is to say, speaking in general terms, it is a question of *mental suggestion at a distance* affecting some particular intellect.

We grant the truth of this theory.

The psychic waves (if they exist) cannot choose their own course. If they reach a given place, they must strike, indiscriminately, all the brains which are there. Only those which are in a particular state — a state still to be determined — are affected.

Granted this, it is evident that everything depends on the brains struck by the waves. Are all struck, without a doubt.

⁷² See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1902, p. 70, and *Les Derniers jours de Henri Heine*, Paris 1884.

But some are not affected in any way, either consciously or unconsciously. The others, on the contrary, are struck, and evince the fact that they have received an impression through a phenomenon of some sort: they are good receiving apparatus.

Therefore, in the case of manifestations of someone dying, if there exists within the sphere of action of the psychic waves a brain that is properly attuned, the psychic telegram is recorded. If not, it passes by the brain which it has merely grazed, without leaving a trace.

I know very well that this theory of psychic waves is in the highest degree debatable; for cases of telepathy are known *over such great distances* that psychic waves cannot be compared to those assumed in the explanation of wireless telegraphy (Hertzian waves). Nevertheless, if the “force of attraction” of the moon on our oceans be admitted, given the known facts, it is not unreasonable to accept the hypothesis of a “psychic force” and psychic waves, whatever be their nature.

When the “psychic force” — which exists beyond a doubt but the nature of which is entirely unknown to us — is sufficient to pass within range of a given brain, whether it comes from near or far, it registers its transit upon that brain through some phenomenon, a phenomenon psychic or physiological according as it acts upon this or that part of the nervous centers. On the other hand, other brains let it range the world without being affected by a power so mysterious.⁷³

All the readers of this work will know how to value these reflections on the part of Monsieur Marcel Baudouin. Since beginning this book they have read of just that sort of thing. But it must be added that the wave theory does not, in physics, eliminate the emission theory. More than one phenomenon would seem to indicate that *luminous and projections, ions, and electrons are transmitted from the sun to the earth.*

Let us note, in passing, the form taken by Madame Selden’s audition and vision and the singular name by which she was known to her friend.

How strange these manifestations are!

I am nearing the limits assigned this volume, and am afraid of tiring my readers; but it seems to me that before these panoramas we have the same feeling as when we visit the museum of the Louvre: Where shall we stop? Let us forget, however, that apart from the *manifestations* which we are reviewing, it will, perhaps, be still more interesting to gain information as to “*apparitions.*” Let us slacken our speed.

Nevertheless, the following telepathic vision of Captain Escourrou, killed at the age of twenty-seven at the siege of Puebla — a vision perceived by his mother in Sèvres — is so remarkable that I should be extremely sorry not to add it, as well, to the foregoing. Let us read the following letter from Monsieur Gustave Dubois to Dr. Dariex.⁷⁴

Ed. Escourrou and I had formed, in college, a friendship which only death could sunder; I came, therefore, into close touch with his family, visiting them often. His father, a captain who had retired from the position of chief recruiting officer of the Seine, was at the time of the war with Mexico an officer whose duty it was to take charge of visitors to the Senate; he was living in Sèvres. At the time his campaign began, Edouard had rejoined the Second Regiment of Zouaves, in which he was serving as lieutenant.

I got several letters from him; I saw his family every week, and always, of course, we spoke of the dear absent boy. One day I found his mother in tears: “Ah, my dear child,” she told me, as soon as she saw me, “I have a cruel presentiment; I am to lose my son. This morning, when I went into the room where his portrait is [this portrait had been painted by one of his comrades, Thiónot, on his last leave of absence] to greet it as I do every day, I saw, saw *distinctly*, that one of his eyes had been put out, and that blood was running over his face. They have killed my son.”

I tried to console her, to make her understand that what she had believed she had seen, was, perhaps, an effect of the light; nothing could shake her conviction that her son was dead, or at least wounded.

Some time afterward we received the news of Captain Escourrou’s death, — killed at the age of twenty-seven, at the siege of Puebla. He had been called “a future general” by Colonel Clerc, his colonel of the Second Zouaves, on the occasion of the first assault upon Malakoff, during the siege of Sebastopol.

The sergeant-major of the poor dead boy’s company brought back his arms, the last sad souvenir of a dear son. He wept when he told us of his commander’s death. The first in the assault upon the penitentiary, he was leading his men on, when a bullet, striking the handle of his saber, broke his right wrist. Seizing his weapon with his left hand, he advanced at the head of his men. Again he was struck by a bullet. It pierced his eye, killing him before he could utter a cry.

There, in all its simplicity, is the story of an occurrence of which I have proof. If certain contributory circumstances escape me, I can certify that Madame Escourrou before she had news of the death of her son, had seen the dear portrait, with one *eye put out and bleeding.*

⁷³ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1902, p. 182.

⁷⁴ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1891, p. 148.

Monsieur and Madame Escourrou are still living in the rue Péronnet, in Argenteuil; their son, Albert Escourrou, is a special commissary: superintendent of the Ministry of the Interior, in the Place Beauvau.

Gustave Dubois

Madame Escourrou, her son, and various witnesses were examined by Dr. Dariex. No doubt remains as to this example of clairvoyance, of sight at a distance, of a telepathic phenomenon connected with the death of the captain at the siege of Puebla. It was on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1863, that the occurrence took place in Mexico, and that Madame Escourrou in Sèvres, had a realization and perception of the death of her son. Did we not see an identical case above, —that of Lieutenant de Boislève (page 155).

It is time to end this chapter, despite the numerous documents I now have spread before me. However, a literary reminiscence should have a place just here.

We may inscribe in this volume, "*At the Moment of Death*," the names of two great minds, Dante and Petrarch.

A dream which coincided with the death of Beatrice may be found in Dante's youthful poem the "Vita Nuova." He saw Beatrice for the first time when he was nine and she eight, — already an angel of pure and radiant beauty. He saw her again nine years later. She was still more beautiful, and during his entire life she was the lady of his heart. So has he glorified her in the "Divina Commedia." She was born in Florence, in 1266, and died in the same city in 1290, at the age of twenty-four. She was the daughter of Folco di Ricovero Portinari, a distinguished citizen of Florence, founder of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova. The poet tells us that he had a kind of terrible vision of the end of the world, accompanied by an earthquake, and believed that he saw coming toward him a friend, who told him, "Your excellent lady has departed this world." An angel bore her to the skies. In his grief he thought that he himself was dying.⁷⁵

Dante Alighieri (1265—1321) was a supreme poet, and it is in the highest sense of the word that we may call him a visionary. Petrarch also saw, in a dream, the death of his dear Laura, while he was traveling in Italy and she was dying of the pest in Avignon (1348). He saw, too, the death of the Bishop of Lombès.⁷⁶

The phenomena which we are studying, and which seem new to so many persons, were observed in the fourteenth century, in the thirteenth century, and in the times of the Romans, the Greeks, and the Egyptians, as well as in our times.

In the preceding pages we were gradually approaching manifestations of the dead. Those manifestation of which we have just read, are connected with the dying, and with the living functioning just before the supreme moment, or at the moment itself. It is, at times, difficult to make a classification. In closing this chapter, I shall add still one more manifestation. It throws a bridge between the two worlds, and might be attributed to some one dead. It is very strange and most fantastic, and is told us by an observer with whom my readers are already familiar, Dr. de Sermyn. It is a transmission between France and Greece. Let us read it⁷⁷:

We had in the hospital a young Frenchman named Landry, whose brain was affected by a general paralysis. It was, I believe, in 1873.

He occupied a cell, which he never left, and was in charge of a keeper, for his madness was hardly a pleasant thing. Every morning a sister from the hospital, named Sister Aiphonsine, brought him his breakfast.

Next to Landry's room there were two other rooms, each occupied by a harmless lunatic. Sister Alphonsine was in the habit of first serving these, and then going to Landry. She did not leave him until after he had finished his breakfast.

Now, whenever Landry heard the sister coming, he would grow restless, would run about in his cell, and utter cries, stamping his feet on the floor, and kicking the door, and would not stop his noise until the sister reached him.

After a stay of three months in the hospital, Landry was sent back to France, to his own district. The room was cleaned and locked, and remained unoccupied.

Now, one morning Sister Alphonsine took breakfast to the patients who occupied the rooms next that of Landry. She with stupefaction, in the chamber which was still empty and still locked, cries, and the noise of stamping, exactly like that which the madman had made while waiting for his breakfast. She opened the door of the room. Finding no one there, she knelt down,

⁷⁵ Dante: *La Vie Nouvelle* (Edition Charpentier, Paris, 1853), p. 35

⁷⁶ See *Le Génie de Pétrarque* (Parme et Avignon, 1778), p. 127.

⁷⁷ Excerpt from the work *Contribution a L'Etude de Certaines Facultés Cérébrales Méconnues*, p. 28

trembling all over, and, without knowing why, addressed a prayer to God.

Upon my arrival at the hospital, she told me of the occurrence. She was still pale and agitated.

“Landry has just died, Sister,” I told her: “similar manifestations have already been observed by thousands of persons; they are not very rare”

“I think he is dead, too,” she told me “I had a presentiment of it. The prayer I said in the middle of his room was a prayer addressed to God for the repose of his soul.”

I made a note of the day and the time.

One month afterward we learned, through the French Consulate, that Landry had died in France on the very day of his manifestation. As for the time, I was never able to ascertain it.

Dr. W. C. de Sermyn

Was the gruesome hero of this story already dead at the time of the uproar? Or was he borne into his former cell as a phantasm, while still alive, in his death-agony? Did this strange incident follow death? The phenomenon had not occurred before, and was observed on the day of his dissolution. We have already asked ourselves if some part of our being does not remain in the habitations in which we have lived (see above, Chapter X, page 279). May not latent emanations persist when the vital rhythm of the heart has stopped forever?

We are entering the domain of manifestations of the human being after death.

We now reach a further stage, — *Apparitions at the Moment of Death*.



APPARITIONS OF THE DYING AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH

Death is but one of the hours upon our dial, and the hands of our dial are destined to revolve eternally.
Saint Martin, the unknown philosopher

We now reach the end of our second expedition into the world of the Beyond. After the general manifestations of the dying, which are so varied, apparitions will be revealed to us. They will close this second volume, leading us directly to the third, and allowing us almost to enter the mysterious realms of Death. The manifestations which have just passed before our eyes took place at the very moment of the soul's departure. As we remarked, these manifestations do not prove survival after death, but they prove the existence of an independent psychic force which has the faculty of functioning at a distance from the body. It is not impossible that a certain number of them occurred not immediately before, but immediately after dissolution. In this chapter are not only manifestations, but apparitions as well, coinciding with death, —preceding it in most instances, but following it, perhaps, in a certain number of cases. These apparitions are even more remarkable than the manifestations just given.

For centuries and centuries these strange phenomena have been noted and related in the literature of all countries. I have at this moment a whole library of them before my eyes, and my readers have already found a certain number of them in my works. My present duty is to give, above all, accounts of observations which were sent me personally, and vouched for; but the others, from different sources, will not be neglected.

Once again, let us state precisely the nature of our scientific procedure.

Our method must, more than ever, be extremely exacting. Apparitions of those living or dead! Before making affirmations let us be certain.

Examples of very obvious resemblances may be entirely misleading, may be valueless. I shall give a case of this, taken from the work done at my Juvisy observatory. One day — October 10, 1910 — among our photographs of clouds we obtained an effect resembling a man reclining, his beautiful white hair, his bold forehead, his eyes, his nose, his beard, his neck, were remarkably modeled. Now, this photograph was an absolute portrait of Monsieur Fallières, then President of the French Republic; it was so exact that when someone, interested in his opinion of it, showed it to him, his first exclamation was: "I've never had a portrait more like me." (It may be seen in "L'Illustration" of that date.) This likeness had lasted for some seconds; it was an effect of the light on the clouds.

Yes, there are fictitious resemblances. But should we be justified in concluding that therefore the photograph does not exist? If we judge cautiously, does that mean that we must be blind?

I shall open this chapter with the following account; it has been made the subject of a special analytical investigation, one with which my readers are already familiar, for it was given, as a foot-note, on page 240 of "L'Inconnu." The coincidence was proved with remarkable precision, and I give it here as typical of the procedure our investigation demands:

Two friends were employed in the same office; there had been a tie of friendship between them for eight years. One of them, Frédéric, upon his arrival at the office on Monday, March 19, 1883, complained of having had an attack of indigestion. He consulted a druggist, who told him that his liver was in a bad condition, and gave him medicine. On Thursday he was no better. On Saturday he did not go to the office, and his comrade Nicolas learned that he had had himself examined by a physician and that the latter had advised him to rest for two or three days, but did not think it was anything serious.

That same Saturday, March 24th, toward evening, Nicolas was sitting in his room. He perceived his friend standing before him, dressed as usual. He noted the details of his dress, — a hat with a black band around it, an overcoat, unbuttoned, a cane in his hand, etc.

The specter gazed at him, then disappeared. At that instant he thought of the words of Job: "A spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up." He then felt an icy coldness go through him, and his hair rose. He turned to his wife and asked her the time.

“Twelve minutes to nine,” she answered.

He then added: “My reason for asking is because Frédéric is dead. I’ve just seen him.”

She tried to persuade him that he had imagined this, but he assured her that his vision had been so clear that no argument could make him change his mind.

The next day, Sunday, about three o’clock in the afternoon, Frederic’s brother came to announce his death; it had accrued the evening before, about nine o’clock.

The narrator’s wife attested, formally, the truth of his narration.

Moreover, the brother of the deceased, as well, in a special letter vouched for the authenticity with the other two accounts; in it he declared that he had been all the more impressed by reason of the fact that he had previously been absolutely impervious to this sort of ideas.

It is not to be doubted that death took place during the twenty-five minutes which passed between twenty-five minutes to nine and nine o’clock. Now, the vision occurred at twelve minutes to nine. If the synchronism of the two events was not absolute, it is not possible in any ease to suppose, even with the least favorable interpretation, that there was an interval of more than twelve minutes.

The probability of death, during a given period of twenty-four hours, is expressed by the figures $22/100 \times 1/365$ for an adult of indeterminate age; but for a man of forty-eight (Frédéric’s age) it is $13.5/1000$, the official figures given by tables of mortality. This gives us, therefore, as the probability of daily mortality, $13.5/1000 \times 1/365 = 1/27,037$. During a period of need one hundred and twenty times in twenty-four, the probability will be one hundred and twenty times less, — that is to say, $13.5/1000 \times 1/365 \times 1/120$, — and we have this equation:

$$x = 1/248 \times 13.5/1000 \times 1/365 \times 1/120 = 1/804,622,222.$$

In the present case the probability of *telepathic influence compared with the probability of chance coincidence is in this proportion: eight hundred and four million six hundred and twenty-two thousand two hundred and twenty-two to one.*

This constitutes moral certainty. The apparition of the deceased to his friend is not to be doubted.

The objection that chance, that fortuitous coincidence, came into play is ruled out by calculations similar to those just read, — calculations rationally applied to the innumerable cases in which the time of death has been precisely determined. We possess accounts of hundreds of cases of this sort.

The following examples do not all represent coincidences at the very instant of death, but the correspondence of the death to the apparition has been nonetheless scrupulously established.

We are now making a scientific investigation; that is to say, we must acknowledge the truth only of occurrences which are authentic and unquestionable.

To seek to explain phenomena of which one was not certain would be a bit ingenuous. A historian of apparitions of phantoms recalls the definition of a traveler: “An ingenuous fellow who faces dangers that he may relate them to people who will not believe them.” That is a humorous sally which does not prevent one from traveling and observing for one’s own enjoyment, — and of making fun, just a bit, of people who will not believe the stories one might tell them. One does not gather these facts for “the gallery,” but for the sake of truth.

It is most certain that in the history of religion and of miraculous happenings, of spiritualistic and magnetic experiments, etc., a great deal of time was spent in discussing occurrences which never happened. This was, to say the least, rather ridiculous. We are forewarned, and our way lies before us.

We found in Volume I (page 73) the case of a woman who, dying suddenly appeared to her son, telling him: “Good-by, I am dying.” The time of the apparition coincided with the very moment of death. We also found, in the same volume (page 84), the case of a man, who had just killed himself, appearing to his friend, his skull open. This, too, exactly coincided with the moment of death.

While on the subject of apparitions precisely timed, we may recall that of the priest seated before a hearth.

It was related by one of his nieces ("Uranie," page 209). The narrator's account is very simple:

I was still quite a young girl, and slept with my elder sister. One evening we had just gone to bed and blown out the candle. The fire on the hearth, which had not altogether gone out, lighted the room faintly. suddenly, to my great surprise, I perceived near the fireplace a priest, seated before the hearth, warming himself. His figure, his features, were that of our uncle the archpriest, — as well as his corpulence. At once I told my sister what I had seen. She looked toward the fireplace, and saw the same apparition. She, too, recognized our uncle. an unspeakable terror took possession of both of us, and we cried, "Help!" at the top of our lungs. My father, who was sleeping in an adjoining room, was wakened by these distracted cries. He got up in all haste, and came in, a candle in his hand. The phantom had vanished; there was no one in the room. The next day we learned that our uncle, the archpriest, had died the evening before.

This incident occurred in Saint-Gaudens.

Certain shallow minds are at no loss to account for all this. It was only chance, they believe, — that is to say, (1) a causeless hallucination; (2) an accidental coincidence with the death of the man who was seen.

Really, these skeptics are easily satisfied!

That the defunct priest actually came, in his cassock, and seated himself in the chimney-corner, is inadmissible; the same is true of the dying man of whom we read above (Frédéric) with his hat and cane. Then what took place on these occasions?

The worthy priest must have thought of his nieces at the moment of his death, and must have acted mentally upon their minds. It was an example of thought as a generator of images, dealt with in Chapter III. It was the same thing in the case of Frédéric, appearing to his comrade.

It cannot be doubted that these phenomena took place at the very moment of death.

I do not wish to repeat here what my readers may have seen in "Uranie," published in 1889, and "L'Inconnu" published in 1899, as to unquestionably authentic apparitions of the dying; but it seems to me opportune to recall, among other typical examples, Monsieur Contamine's experience in Commentry ("L'Inconnu," page 120):

Seated, one day, in his room, before his wardrobe, in which there was a mirror, he was occupied in putting on his shoes. He saw in the mirror, very clearly, the door behind him open, and one of his intimate friends come in. His friend was in evening dress, and was very carefully groomed. Monsieur Contamine turned around to shake hands with him. To his stupefaction, he saw no one in the room. He rushed out at once and questioned the servant, who happened at that moment to be on the stairway: "You just met Monsieur X—, coming out of my room; where is he?" — "I saw absolutely no one, I assure you." — "Come, now! He left my room just a moment ago." — "I'm absolutely certain that no one either entered or came out." Monsieur Contamine, intensely curious and quite astounded, made inquiries at once, and learned that his friend had committed homicide by accident. Wishing to escape the legal consequences of this, he had committed suicide at the very moment when the apparition had appeared, and in the very costume, in which he had been seen, reflected in the mirror.

This example is definitely characterized by its precision. I have brought together so great a number of similar ones that they might, in themselves make up an entire volume, including the death-scenes of which our Chapter VI showed so many instances. What concerns us most is the difficulty of choosing, and it is not without regret that, on account of the limitation of space, I must omit some extremely curious cases. I must confine myself to pointing out the principal ones, with the intention of publishing, some day, a special book on apparitions. Really, it is time to declare that those who continue to doubt are either ignorant or insincere.

It will be our concern to decide whether the examples are cases of apparitions of the dying or apparitions of the dead. The distinction is an extremely difficult one to make. The following remarkable case is one in point.

We shall have before our eyes an account of the apparition of a young girl to the friend of her childhood. There is in my mind no question of its authenticity, for I have known the narrator for a great many years, and her deposition has almost a judicial character.

When I was a very young girl I had a girlfriend of my own age. Our families were on very intimate terms, and were neighbors, so she came every evening to study her lessons with me.

We were in the drawing-room, seated in rocking-chairs.

Suddenly my companion stopped reading and said to me, "Lita, I've something to ask you." Naturally, I answered, "What is it?" — "I want you to promise me something, and I want you to keep your promise."

I thought the serious air with which she spoke extraordinary.

“If I promise you something, you can be sure I ‘ll keep my promise. What would you like?”

She answered, “If you get married and have a daughter, I want you to name her after me.” I laughed and replied, “That’s understood; and it must be the same with you: if you have one, you must give her my name.”

She then added: “That isn’t all. If one of us two dies, and we’re not together, we must promise each other that the one who dies first will come and say good-by to the other, and will kiss her one last time.”

I answered: “Really, you’re foolish to have such ideas! What’s come over you?”

“Promise me!” she said.

“Well, all right,” I replied

“I’m contented now,” she added. “For some time I’ve had a sort of obsession to ask you that.”

We never spoke of it again, my dear Master; I wish to give you my assurance of this.

Five or six months afterward, on my friend’s birthday, I went to spend the day at her home, with several other young girls.

We danced the whole afternoon, and had a very good time. She was well, and there was nothing to make one think that she was soon to die.

When I was taking leave of her, in the evening, her mother said to me: “Don’t count on Jeanne for two or three days. I have to make some visits, and I’m taking her with me.”

On the third day I lay down and went to sleep as usual. Toward midnight I awakened, uttering cries of terror. Jeanne was there before me! My grandmother got up, and tried to calm me, but nothing could prevent my seeing Jeanne: she was there, and she said to me: “*Good-by! I’m dying, and I’ve kept my promise.*”

My grandmother had my good nurse, Anne-Marie, sit down beside my bed. The nurse, humoring me, succeeded in calming me so thoroughly that I ended by going to sleep again. But toward four o’clock in the morning I awakened once more; I felt Jeanne kissing my forehead. She was icy cold, and a second time she told me: “Good-by! I’m dying.”

Again I began to shout: “Grandmother! Jeanne’s dead!” No one could calm me. I wished to hurry over to her home. My grandmother promised me that at five o’clock she would send someone to find out. Nevertheless I could not help getting up, — I was so impatient. Through obedience, however, I waited until five, though I was thoroughly convinced of my friend’s death.

At five o’clock someone was sent. Horrors! My dream was real: my poor friend had died at four o’clock in the morning, the time at which she had kissed me and I had felt her, icy as a block of marble.

Since then I have often thought of her; but no manifestation has ever occurred.

Such is, my dear Master, a simple account of what happened to me, myself; it is a faithful one.

Angèle Ximenez

Monte-Carlo, April 15, 1918.

(Letter 4112)

I shall add nothing to this story, except that the account does not, perhaps, correspond to reality with an absolute precision. Inevitably recollections are more or less distorted by time (this incident occurred nearly half a century ago), but the apparition of the young friend to her companion at the moment of death is in itself absolutely indubitable. It happened in Santiago de Cuba, in 1871. The narrator, Mademoiselle Ximenez de Bustamante, born in 1855, was, therefore, sixteen years old at that time.

Was her young friend already dead, or at the point of death? Nothing proves that she was dead: she felt herself dying. I am therefore classifying the occurrence among apparitions of the *dying*, rather than among apparitions of the *dead*.

Let us investigate and compare similar occurrences.

The following account of an apparition, sent me from Russia on June 9, 1899, is a document of the same sort:

I was nine years old. One of my sisters, aged fifteen, whom I loved tenderly, was one day walking with me in the garden; she told me that she had not long to live. I made fun of her, just a little, and asked her to stop talking in this absurd way.

Seven years afterward I was in Moscow, in the Nicolaieff School. On June 16, 1870, I was lying in the dormitory; in it the beds touched, the heads side by side. I was sleeping quietly. Suddenly I had a sensation as though someone had touched my

back. I looked up, and recognized my sister, seated on my bed. She said to me, "Good-by, Nadia," and vanished. It was five o'clock in the morning. My heart sank; I went back to sleep; however, and did not waken again until the bell rang.

That same day my elder sister arrived; she came to tell me that our sister had died at five o'clock in the morning.

N. Ubanenko

(Letter 818)

These observations are more numerous than one imagines; let us repeat, for the thousandth time, that to see in them only hallucinations is absurd. Here is another case. Madame Marguerite Perret, a relative of Stephen Liégeard, wrote me, on August 24, 1920, that the following happening had absolutely convinced her of her sister's survival after death:

We had both been brought up in the Dominican Convent of Chalon-sur-Saône. An epidemic of typhoid fever broke out suddenly in the school, and the terrible malady attacked my sister. The pupils were immediately sent home to their parents, and my father took me to Beaune, to the home of close friends, Monsieur and Madame Bourgeois. (Later, Monsieur Bourgeois became Mayor of Beaune.)

The nuns gave him permission to remain by the bedside of his sick daughter. Since I had been brought up with very religious ideas, I had begun to offer up prayers to the Holy Virgin for nine successive days, — prayers for my sister's recovery. I was absolutely convinced that on the ninth day my sister would be well. I was sleeping alone, in a room the door of which gave on the drawing-room. A hallway separated Monsieur and Madame Bourgeois's room from mine.

Suddenly, in the middle of the night of December 4th (the fifth day of my prayers) I was awakened by a strange noise in the drawing-room. One would have said that someone was dragging a chain. I was then, and still am, an extremely light sleeper. At once I half sat up in bed, listening. What was my astonishment when the noise of chains turned to that of light steps on the floor, approaching my bed! I remember that my heart began to beat most violently. Terrified, I was ready to scream; I asked myself if it would be wise to do so (for I fancied that someone was coming to kill me). Then suddenly I felt a hand brush lightly against the sheets, and, for the duration of a lightning flash, *I saw my sister*.

It was too much! In the utmost terror I uttered piercing screams. At once they rushed into my room. "What's the matter? Why, what's the matter?" — "I've just seen my sister: she came near my bed; I heard her steps; she touched the sheets." — "But, my child," Monsieur and Madame Bourgeois answered, "that's impossible; you've been dreaming; your sister is in Chalon, very ill." — "No, no, it wasn't a dream! I heard her steps; they made the floor crack. I'm sure of it; I wasn't dreaming; she came; *I saw her*."

They calmed me, gave me orange-flower water, and told me:

"Go back to sleep. It's only five o'clock in the morning."

At noon we were at table, when the door-bell rang. The maid went to open the door, and my father entered; he was holding a handkerchief up to his eyes. Sobbing, he told us that my poor sister had died that very morning, at five o'clock.

Monsieur and Madame Bourgeois exclaimed simultaneously:

"Why, that's extraordinary! It was five o'clock when her sister Marguerite said she had seen her in her room."

My father was then told what had happened in the night. That whole day he did not cease repeating: "What a strange coincidence!"

A mere coincidence? No, a thousand times no! Those dear to us give us, in this way, an unexceptionable proof *that they still exist and survive what we call death*.

(Letter 4254)

The truth of this experience is beyond cavil; it has for us the greatest interest; but I do not see in it a *proof* of survival after death. This manifestation may have taken place at the very moment of death, and even before. The partisans whom we have thus far investigated are instructive in demonstrating this. The experimental method is more exacting than sentiment.

I am not denying that the manifestation occurred after dissolution; I am saying, only, that this has not been proved. The narrator herself is convinced that it did so occur, — above all, on account of the following incident, told of in the same letter:

One day a medium, who practised spirit-writing, was holding a pencil in her hand. *She knew nothing of my life*, and was unaware that when very young I had lost my sister. An invisible being signing herself Marie (my sister's given name) caused her to write.

"Oh, my dear little sister," I exclaimed, "if it's really you who are there, then tell me what I must think of what happened to me at the moment of your death!"

"Yes," the medium wrote, "it was really I whom you saw: you weren't wrong in thinking that."

"But then, since it was your Peri I saw, I can't understand why the floor cracked beneath your steps."

"It was to warn you, to attract your attention; I was going to speak to you, but you screamed so! In any case," she added, "I accomplished what I wished to, for you remember it, you see."

"Remember it! It seems as though it were yesterday!"

I should like, particularly, to be able to see in this, as the narrator does, a proof of her dear sister's survival after death, but it appears to me that no *proof* is given here. All that the medium said was in Madame Perret's mind. Mediumistic experiments are often unquestionable cases of thought-transmission. One example, among a thousand, is that related by Aksakof ("Animisme et Spiritisme," page 476), concerning Mademoiselle Pribitkoff, who had given mental dictation, through will power, to a table which spelled out by means of rappings a sentence originating in her own mind. The operator did not touch the table, and stood at some distance from it.⁷⁸

Our method does violence at times to our hearts' desires; but it is necessary for the positive proof which we hope for. Let us be prudent. Our conclusions will be the more trustworthy.

I have left unpublished the greater part of the goodly number of accounts sent me, though the information furnished by them is not always to be disdained. For example, Letter 352 gives the case of a young girl whose mother was drowned, — a victim of the unforgettable catastrophe of Saint-Gervais, on July 10, 1892. The girl asserted that she was sure of her mother's death because she had seen her phantom pass, again and again, through the apartment. This is possible, but not at all proved. The shade did not appear to her until thirty-six hours after the death; the catastrophe was then known to her, and anything might be feared. Strictly speaking, the imagination of this young girl of sixteen may have been a factor.

These reflections confirm our convictions as to the value of prudence.

But prudence must not blind us, and keep us from seeing reality.

To disdain everything, to laugh at everything, does not lead to much. It is absurd to suppose that everyone is deceiving himself, or that everyone is lying; certain accounts are too authentic to be despised. My readers have not forgotten, for example, the story published in "L'Inconnu" as to the Moscow student who lost his young wife, whom he adored. She was seen that very day, by her father, who was then living in Poulkovo, near Petrograd; unaware that she had died, he saw her, suddenly, beside him. To suppose that the young student and his father lied, or that the account is farcical, would be the height of absurdity. Was it an illusion? No; this apparition, telling of a death which occurred six hundred and fifty kilometers away, a demise which was unforeseen, thrusts itself upon our attention. It had a cause, and this cause was the dying woman: a knowledge of phantasms has prepared us to understand it.

The following apparition would seem to show not the psychic influence of one mind upon another, of a brother's mind upon that of his sister, but the real existence of the dying man's phantasm, for the person who witnessed the presence of a brother near his sister at the moment of his death had not known him.

The Story was recounted by Mrs. Clerke of London, and was published in "Phantasms of the Living."⁷⁹

In the month of August, 1864, toward three or four o'clock in the afternoon, I was seated on the veranda of our house in Barbados; I was reading. My nurse was wheeling about in the garden, in a baby-carriage, my little girl, aged about eighteen months. After some time I rose, to go back into the house, having noticed nothing at all, when she asked me, "Madame, who was

⁷⁸ This example is typical. The experimenter dictated (the dictation came, supposedly, from Hahnemann himself) in French: "*I grew unwise, as to medicine, from the day I invented homeopathy.*"

⁷⁹ II, 61; and *Hallucinations Télépathiques*, p. 261.

that gentleman who just spoke to you?" — "No one spoke to me," I said. — "Oh, yes, Madame, a very pale, very tall gentleman; he talked to you a great deal, and you were impolite to him, for you never answered him." I repeated that there had been no one, and felt annoyed with the woman. She begged me to make a note of the date, for she was sure of having seen someone. I did so, and some days later I learned of my brother's death, in Tabago. The strange thing is that I did not see him, and that she, who did not know him, did see him, though he seemed anxious to attract my attention.

May Clerke

In reply to various questions, Mrs. Clerke wrote:

(1) The day of the death and that of the apparition coincided; I had made a note of the date: it was August 3rd.

(2) The description "very pale and very tall" was exact.

(3) She did not know my invalid brother. The nurse had never seen him. She had been in my service for about eighteen months. The occurrence was absolutely spontaneous.

Colonel Clerk, Mrs. Clerk's husband, declared that he clearly remembered the incident concerning his brother-in-law, Mr. John Beresford, who died in Tabago; that he remembered very well the nurse's declaration that she had seen at the moment of his death a gentleman who, from her account, was like Mr. Beresford, leaning over Mrs. Clerke's arm-chair on the veranda.

In this case it would seem, certainly, that the dying man came, himself, as a phantom, to see his sister. She herself did not see him, though the servant did! The statements made are precise.

What a panorama of investigations is unrolling, gradually, before our eyes!

Is it not a question, also, of a phantasm of someone dying — or dead — in the following case? The letter about to be quoted was sent me from Russia, in June, 1889.

It was in 1832; I was twelve years old. Every summer we went to the home of my maternal grandmother, who was a very rich and very aged personage; she was living in the country, and had numerous children and grandchildren; all tried, if possible, to go and spend the summer with her.

One evening, toward seven o'clock, there were more than thirty persons gathered together on the terrace of an immense garden; there were about twenty grandchildren (I was one of them) playing about. Well, all of us saw one of our uncles, who had gone off through the fields after dinner, walking rather slowly along the widest pathway. We saw him stop for a moment some distance from us, look at us, and then walk on again. His wife, who was the first to see him, cried: "Look! Papa's come back!" Then grandmother said, addressing us all, "Children, run quickly and catch uncle; tell him to come and have a cup of tea with us!"

Off we went, like a flash of lightning; when we reached the point where the pathways converged, where all of us had seen him stop, we looked about, on every side. No one! We went back, saying that he was no longer there. Then grandmother addressed one of the servants, who was serving tea: "You saw Monsieur go by?" — "Yes, Madame." — "Go try to find him, and tell him that I'd like him to come here." When the servant reached the point where we had seen uncle stop, and did not find him, he questioned the gardeners who were watering the flowers in the flower-beds, asking them in what direction he had gone. The gardeners were most astonished, for not one of them had seen him go by.

The evening drew to a close; the children were in bed. My uncle's wife, very uneasy, sent several men on horseback, in different directions, to look for her husband. They came back. They had found that the young master had been assassinated near the river where he had been seen bathing, five miles away. At the inquest it was learned that one of the peasants had met him on the bridge; that he told the peasant he had just taken a swim, and that he was going in the direction of the fields by the shortest road, — through the forest beside the river. This same peasant had some minutes afterward met someone whom he afterward supposed was the assassin. It transpired that he actually was.

In its time this extraordinary apparition caused much discussion.

(Letter 676)

What objections can be made to this account? We are always seeking objections, and this is natural. In the first place, I told myself that the person who wrote me these lines in 1899, since she was born in 1820, and was twelve years old in 1832, was seventy-nine when she wrote; this might indicate a weakening of her memory. But I, myself, am writing these pages in 1921; I was born in 1842, and, to tell the truth, do not note any weakness of any sort; I feel the same at seventy-nine as I did at forty or fifty. This objection, therefore, is not valid. Shall we think the story a fabrication? One might say the same of the account each of us gives of what he has seen or done in the course of the day, and we are concerned in this case with a serious occurrence, — with an assassination. A

collective hallucination? A most complicated hypothesis! The natural solution is to admit the projection of a visible phantasm, produced at the moment when this man found himself mortally wounded by the assassin. We have ascertained, above, that these phantasms are not mythical.

Various observations of the same sort are so numerous that they bear one another out by their very similarity. It is impossible to continue to deny them. Here is another:

Monsieur Pouzolz, a planter of Guadeloupe, was living in Anse-Bertrand, a township of the canton of Port-Louise, with his young wife. Every Saturday, about three o'clock, his father-in-law, who was living in Port-Louis, went to see them, riding on horseback through the avenue des Cocotiers, which stretched out before the main gate of the building. He would spend the afternoon and the next day with his children and on Monday would return to Port-Louis.

Dwellings in the colonies are built, almost all, in the same way: there is a square, one-story main building, without any inner court. Around it is a balcony, provided with Venetian blinds which are opened and closed at will. It is surrounded by an empty space, and before it is an avenue, bordered by cabins and gardens belonging to the servants.

Monsieur and Madame Pouzolz, their elbows on the balcony railing, were awaiting their father's arrival, for it was a Saturday, and three o'clock had just struck. After some minutes of waiting they discerned in the distance a horseman whom they were not long in recognizing as the beloved parent. He reached the gate, and sprang from his horse. The two young people, going downstairs, went to the front steps to meet him.

They saw no one. Believing it a joke on the part of her father, Madame Pouzolz cried, laughing:

"Oh, Father! We saw you!"

And, laughing, she began to run around the house, followed by her husband.

When they had gone around it, there was still no one to be found.

"This time," the young woman said to her husband, "we'll catch him surely: you go this way, and I'll go that."

When they had made the circuit in opposite directions, they met, without having come upon any one.

Quite overwhelmed by this inexplicable adventure, they were expressing, mutually, their views, and their stupefaction, when a messenger arrived from Port-Louis, bringing them news of their father's death: *he had died, suddenly, at three o'clock.*

The Ponzolz family, one of the most influential in Guadeloupe, was on intimate terms with my family.⁸⁰

E. Mouton.

This experience reminds us, among others, of the horse man described to me in Letter 142, published in "L'Inconnu" (page 122), — Monsieur Du Quilliou, Mayor of Ille-et Villaine, whose uncle had an absolutely identical vision. In each of these last two instances the deceased must, in expiring, have thought of his relatives, to whom he manifested his presence under his habitual aspect, or that under which he frequently appeared. Evidently, in this case, neither the phantom nor the horse was objective; they could not have been photographed. All took place in the minds of the persons affected by the psychic disturbance. The phenomenon is nonetheless real on that account.

Once more, it must be said that to deny all this is simply stupid.

Among the numberless accounts sent me, here is a rather characteristic one, which came from Copenhagen:

My Dear Professor:

I was taking my examinations for the Polytechnic School, and had had the vision of the past which I shall presently ask you to explain, when my grandmother, one of your readers (all your works have been translated into the Scandinavian), was talking to me; she told me what follows. Pardon my impertinence in taking a moment of your time, so precious for the progress of humanity, but I have a thirst for knowledge, and no one in Copenhagen can give me information as to these problems.

The occurrence took place long ago; but my grandmother remembers it as though it were yesterday. There are impressions one does not forget.

It was in 1832. My grandfather and grandmother had a friend, Monsieur Barring, known and esteemed by all the family. This friend had not come to see them for a long time. One evening, when my grandmother was awaiting her husband, knitting by the light of a candle, she saw Monsieur Barring standing before the closed door, smiling at her with the kindly smile characteristic of him.

She rubbed her eyes, thinking that she was dreaming, or the victim of an hallucination, but this did not make her friend

⁸⁰ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1894, p. 4.

disappear: he stood motionless; about him was a very bright light. This phantom was transparent, and behind him could be seen the gilded border of the wall.

Grandmother was seized with fear; she blew out her candle and threw herself into bed, and under the bedclothes.

When my grandfather returned, he found her suffering greatly; learning that she had recognized Barring, he told her that that was a portent of death to their friend. He made a note of the time the apparition occurred, and resolved to go and call on the friend next day. But on the very morning of the following day a letter informed them of this death; it had taken place at half-past ten the evening before, — the moment of the apparition.

How grateful I should be to you, my dear Professor, if you would give me an explanation of this phenomenon, as well as the following one, which concerns myself.

One day, in order to gain a little recreation from my studies with Professor “Royal Doctor” Jerndopp, I went for a walk along the quay. I was thinking of nothing in particular, when everything about me underwent a singular transformation: the houses, the ships appeared to me not as they are to-day, but as they were in the time of Christian IV (1600).

I was familiar with this spectacle through the study of history; but *I saw it with my own eyes*, and it seemed to me to last several minutes. Then, little by little, reality asserted itself. My impression is unforgettable.

Hoping for your indulgence, I am awaiting, with great impatience, an explanation of these two occurrences that are so strange.

Idon Harsing

(Letter 2350)

It is evident that there was in this last instance an optical illusion. But how did it take place? Of what nature was this reminiscence? There is more than one problem to be solved. As to the apparition of the deceased, coinciding with his death, which was unknown at the time, one would, in truth, have to be violently prejudiced to see in this nothing but a superficial hallucination. Incredulity sometimes becomes a rather simple-minded credulity.

However strange and dramatic it may be, the following apparition is no more debatable than the preceding one.

Monsieur Gaston Fournier, living in Paris, at 21 rue de Berlin, wrote on October 16, 1885:

On February 21, 1879, I was invited to dine at the home of my friends Monsieur and Madame B—. When I entered the drawing-room I noted the absence of someone who usually dined at that house, Monsieur d’E—; I almost always met him at their table. I remarked upon this, and Madame B— answered that their friend, who was employed in a large banking establishment, was doubtless very busy at that time, for they had not seen him for two days. From that moment on, no one mentioned him. The meal went off very gaily, without the mistress of the house having given the least visible sign of any preoccupation. At dinner we had hit upon the plan of ending our evening at the theater. While we were having dessert Madame B— rose to go to her room and dress, leaving us at the table to smoke our cigars. Suddenly we heard a terrible cry. We rushed into the bedroom, and found that the lady had collapsed in an armchair and was almost on the point of fainting.

We went to her side. Little by little, she came to herself, and told us the following story:

“After leaving you, I dressed to go out, and was in front of my mirror, tying the strings of my hat, when suddenly, in this mirror, I saw d’E— come in, by the door. He had his hat on; he looked pale and sad. Without turning around, I spoke to him: ‘Well, here you are! Do sit down.’ When he didn’t answer I turned around, and saw nothing. Then I grew frightened; I uttered the scream which you heard.”

My friend, that he might reassure his wife, began to joke with her, calling the apparition a nervous hallucination, and telling her that d’E— would be greatly flattered to learn to what extent he occupied her thoughts; then, as she was still trembling, we suggested that we leave at once, in order to cut her emotion short; we said that we should miss the rising of the curtain.

“I haven’t thought of our friend for one moment,” this lady said, “since Monsieur Fournier asked me the reason for his absence. I’m not timid, and I’ve never had an hallucination; I assure you that there’s something extraordinary in this, and, as for me, I can’t go out without having had news of our friend. Go to where he lives, I beg of you; it’s the only way to reassure me.”

I was of the same opinion, and both of us left for d’E—’s rooms; he lived a very short distance away. As we were walking along we made many a joke on the subject of Madame B—’s fears.

When we got there we asked the concierge if our friend was at home. “Yes, he hasn’t come down all day.”

He lived in a little bachelor apartment, and had no servant. We went upstairs and rang several times, without getting any response. We rang more loudly, then knocked with all our strength, with no greater success. B—, agitated in spite of himself, said to me: “It’s absurd; the concierge must have made a mistake; he’s gone out. Let’s go down.” But the concierge assured us that he had not gone out, — that he was absolutely certain of this.

Really frightened, we went up with him, and again tried to make our friend open the door for us. Then, hearing no movement in the apartment, we sent for a locksmith. The door was forced open, and we found our friend lying on his bed; he had been killed by two revolver shots. His body was still warm.

The physician, whom we sent for at once, ascertained that he had at first tried to commit suicide by swallowing the contents of a small bottle of laudanum, and then — finding, doubtless, that the poison did not act quickly enough — he had fired two revolver shots, aimed at his heart. According to the physician's statement, death had taken place about an hour before. There was an almost exact coincidence with Madame B—'s so-called hallucination. On the mantelpiece, there was a letter from him, telling Monsieur and Madame B— of his resolution, — a letter addressing Madame B— in terms particularly affectionate.

Gaston Fournier⁸¹

The explanation is the same as in the preceding cases. The desperate man projected his thoughts toward Madame B—, and this projection produced the image of the friend in the act of calling.

Apparitions of this sort are so numerous that this chapter alone might be expanded into a thick volume, simply by giving the occurrences, without comments. Let us record here still another telepathic impression, not less dramatic, an account of which was sent me in August, 1920:

Monsieur de la R— was at his home, a small residence in Nantes, in 1860, with his wife and his mother-in-law. The latter's son, Monsieur F. C—, was hunting in the environs, near Verton. About four o'clock in the afternoon, to the great surprise of those about her, the mother seemed suddenly overcome, and cried:

"It's you, my child? Why, you're wounded! Just look! François has blood on his neck! It's terrible! What happened?"

She almost fainted away. They gathered about her, telling her that she was the victim of an hallucination; she remained in a state of great agitation. They sent for the family physician: he could give no explanation.

At seven o'clock they brought back the hunter's body; he had been killed by an accident at the exact time of the apparition. While he was climbing over a hedge, his gun had gone off; the bullet had pierced his throat and chin.

R. D. de Maratray

(Letter 4257)

These cases, as we were saying, are numerous, and furnish us with a goodly pile of concordant documents; they show us, under various aspects, the psychic element in human beings. A certain number of my readers have long since had an opportunity to read the following statements in "Uranie": "Our body is but a current of molecules, controlled and organized by the immaterial force which animates us. We may call living beings souls clothed in air. The human body is the visible manifestation of a guiding force. Like the world-system, man is a dynamism. The principle, that which creates forms, is the dynamic element." Since these lines were written (1889) psychic science has made considerable progress. As part of this progress, we may note the experimental study of materialization, which shows us (I have been a witness of it) that bodily organs may be formed from the substance emanating from a medium's organism.⁸²

What new horizons are opened to us by these observations! Apparitions will one day be explained. Let us continue our examination of them.

Monsieur Jattefaux, a well-known printer of the Lahure printing establishment (he was held in high regard by Paris writers on scientific subjects) confided to me the following family reminiscence:

It was in Blois, during the war of 1870. My grandmother, who was ill, was taken by her son to Laval, where he was living. My grandfather remained in Blois, with us, until December 9th. We had been receiving news of the state of my grandmother's health; but at that date the Prussians reached Blois, and the mail service was stopped.

On December 25th, my grandfather told us, at breakfast, a dream he had had in the night. He had seen his wife before him, for several minutes; she had slowly approached him, and *breathed upon his face*. She had then disappeared.

When the German armies left Blois, in the month of March, 1871, and communication was again established, we received a letter from my uncle (from Laval) dated December 25, 1870; it informed us of my grandmother's death, which had

⁸¹ *Hallucinations télépathiques*, p. 244; *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, I, 22.

⁸² See *Les Phénomènes dits de Matérialisation*, by Madame Bisson, with 165 diagrams and 36 plates (Paris, Alcan, 1914). The lecture by Dr. Geley, at the General Psychological Institute, with 23 photographs (Paris, 1918) and also *Materializations-Phenomena* by Dr. de Schrenck, with 150 photographs and 30 plates (Munich, 1914). The philosophic deductions are presented in Dr. Geley's recent work, *De l'inconscient au conscient* (Paris, Alcan, 1919). Previous to these experiments, there were scarcely any other characteristic ones but those — so memorable, however — of William Crookes, in 1870.

occurred during Christmas night.

I can assure you that these facts are perfectly authentic; the family was so struck by this coincidence that its members retained an absolutely exact memory of it.

(Letter 824)

The dying woman's psychic force acted upon her husband in a manifestation which the dream must have transformed.

Here is another manifestation. I received the following letter from Nice, on June 23, 1899:

It was during the war with Italy that, one day in June, 1859, a friend of mine was breaking his journey at Marseilles. He had stretched himself out on his bed at six o'clock in the evening, to rest from his travels. What was his stupefaction to see his brother, of whom he was extremely fond, pass across the room, — when he knew he was in Italy, with the French expeditionary forces! He sprang from his bed and ran after him; but, alas! it was only a shade, which vanished as it had appeared.

Some weeks before this vision, he had received a letter from this brother, telling him that he was in good health, and that the life in camp was a happy one (he was a volunteer).

When my friend went back to Corsica, his native land, about twenty days after this so-called vision, he found a letter from the Ministry of War awaiting him; it informed him that the young non-commissioned officer had died as a result of wounds received on the battle-field, on the day and at the time when the vision had occurred.

Peretti

3 rue Boyer, Nice.

(Letter 732)

I find among my papers the little note which follows:

Veulettes, August, 1902.

Mademoiselle Suzanne Rainfall, the charming daughter of the well-known orthopedist, has just given us this account:

An extremely pretty young girl, who was soon to be married (this happened five years ago) was having her hair dressed for a dinner given on the occasion of her betrothal. Suddenly, in the mirror which reflected the door of the room in which she was, she saw her fiancé enter; he was very pale. At once she called out to her mother: "There's my fiancé! Why, how pale he is!"

The young girl's mother was surprised to find that there was no one there. An hour afterward the young man's body was brought back: he had been killed by falling from his horse.

It is rather remarkable that these visions are often seen in mirrors. The one which I am about to describe belongs in the same category. An account of it was sent me, supported by attestations, from Versailles, on May 20, 1907:

Your work "*Les Forces Naturelles Inconnues*" prompts me to tell you that I have long wished to inform you as to an apparition which appeared in my family about 1850. I was at that time on a vacation at my grandfather's home; he lived in Antraine, in Ille-et-Vilaine. My uncle, an infantry captain, had left his wife and children with this grandfather for more than a year; they were in excellent health as a result of their stay in the country, and the advantages of a large garden, which they scarcely ever left. The little girl, aged four, and her brother, one year younger, slept in a small room adjoining that of their mother. One night the latter was awakened by her children's cries. Hastening to them, she asked them why they were afraid. The elder answered that she had just seen, at the foot of their bed, a dark-haired man, with large mustaches, who regarded them fixedly. Two days later my aunt learned of the sudden death of her husband; he had died at exactly eleven o'clock, the precise moment of the apparition. The little girl had described her father; she had not seen him for fifteen months, and had not at first been able to recognize him.

Dubois,

Assistant Commissary of Stores (retired).

(Letter 1740)

Here is another experience:

Paris, July 12, 1917.

From my earliest childhood until the age of about thirty, I was brought up — and, above all, very much spoiled — by an old aunt who lived to be ninety — six without an infirmity; each day she still walked her eight or ten kilometers, often

spending whole nights in caring for the sick, in spite of her advanced age. She was the type of old woman that wears a cap; her cheeks were as ruddy as apples.

One night I was awakened suddenly; I perceived a likeness of her, — not very clearly, but it was she beyond a doubt. It was not a picture; it was like a glow resembling her.

I had an intuition that something must have happened to her, and the next day, in reply to a telegram, I learned that she had died at the time she had appeared to me.

I have lost, before and after that, a goodly number of relatives dear to me, but to whom I had never shown myself such a tyrant: never did a similar impression recur.

You see, my dear Master, that it is a commonplace example of telepathy. Doubtless, when she was dying, my dear aunt thought of me, whom she loved above everything else, and our vibrations, in harmony, brought about wireless telegraphy.

Dr. Aug. Manceau

(Letter 3760)

However “commonplace” it be, as the learned doctor calls it, — that is to say, however frequently such things may occur, — this case deserves to be recorded, for our enlightenment. It was an apparition of someone dying, told of calmly.

I received the following record from La Cocha (Tucuman), Argentina, on June 23, 1920:

A.— On December 23, 1917, when I was in bed, wide awake, the room suddenly lighted up, and I saw a man of large stamre appear; he was enveloped in a long brown coat, and his face was almost entirely covered with a hood of the same color. I at first took him for a monk, but, upon reflection, I thought of one of my friends, an Alsatian hunter. Then my memory began to dwell on two persons of about the same height, and whose faces were almost alike (Baron de Gersthein and Gerrer, a manufacturer of Lautenbach). I resolved to clear up this point as soon as the war in Europe should be over, — that is, as soon as the mail could be relied on to a greater extent, for we were cut off from Alsace, which was then under the rod of Germany.

Shortly after the armistice I got a letter from a friend in Guebwiller (Upper Rhine), in which I was informed that Monsieur Théophile Gerrer of Lautenbach had died in the course of the war. Immediately I asked the date of his death. It corresponded with that of the apparition. This did not astonish me at all, since it was the second time such a thing had happened to me, though *the first apparition occurred more than twenty years ago*.

B.—You remember, doubtless, my account of the apparition on a Monday (or maybe Sunday, I believe), *at six o'clock in the morning*, after the chimes of bells had rung for mass. In this case my friend, an old non-commissioned officer of cuirassiers, or Reichs hoffer, appeared to me exactly *twelve* hours after his death, but *without a mustache*. I went, immediately, to the home of the deceased, to gain information, and found that his mouth was bandaged by a strip of white linen which entirely covered his mustache.

Jean Lau

(Letter 4198)

This letter is doubly instructive, by reason of its sincerity. The apparition of the dying man corresponded to his death. There are not sufficient grounds for attributing it to someone deceased, after death, and it may be classed, here, with all the foregoing cases. The account of the dissolution will be found in Volume III, in its original text, which differs from the one given here, not fundamentally, but in a slight matter of dates. This demonstrates once again the variations of memory. The demise occurred on Saturday, April 9, 1898, on the day before Easter, and the apparition was seen on Easter Sunday, at six o'clock in the morning. The dates differed, in the narrator's memory, but the descriptions, which I have just compared, are absolutely the same. These differences in dates are of no importance in the present instance.

How can we explain these apparitions at the hour of dissolution? The letter I shall now give sent me by a correspondent with whom we are already familiar (page 324), tells of another example:

It is our duty to help you in your study of premonitions I wish to inform you that my brother Platon saw our father at the hour of his death. At that time (1883) he was a young student in Moscow, and had left us after the Christmas vacation. Our father was rather weak, for he was in general ill health during the last years of his life. The very day of my brother's departure Papa caught pneumonia; it carried him off in three days. Platon had arrived in Moscow the evening of January 14th, and the next day had been allowed to sleep as late as he liked. When he awakened, on the fifteenth, a few minutes before noon, he was astounded to see our father standing before him! He gazed at him for some moments, then the vision faded away. Thereupon the clock struck twelve, and it was precisely at noon that my father departed this world, on January 15, 1883.

Hélène Schoulgine

Grodno, Russia

July 24, 1900.

(Letter 930)

It will be objected, for the thousandth time, that this was the chance coincidence of a hallucination with a death. No, a thousand times no! It is blind to refuse to see, in these instances, an interpretation ceaselessly repeated.

The Abbé Pachén, of Poitiers, related the following experience, according to his colleague the Abbé Lemoigne, to whom he told it:

A certain lad named Malgorn, a native of the Island of Ouessant, was a pupil in the little seminary of Pont-Croix. Consumptive, and quite ill, he could not go back with the others at the beginning of the school year.

One evening, when the students were filing out of the study-hall to go into the dining-room, Malgorn appeared, with a white parcel under his arm, at a door which gave on to a stairway leading to the dormitory. Three or four pupils (the witness could give their names, since they were in his class) waved their hands to Malgorn; because of the superintendent's presence, they did not dare speak to the new-come. Shortly afterward Malgorn was lost to sight on the stairs, as he went up to the dormitory.

That very evening, one of the pupils told a Monsieur Mazéas, a priest: "Malgorn, your fellow-countryman has just arrived; we saw him." The priest answered: "Good. He'll come to see me tomorrow."

As the afternoon wore on without any one seeing Malgorn again, the professor went to the dormitory. The pupil's bed had not been slept in. The next day news of Malgorn's death reached the school. He had died at the very hour at which he had been seen on the stairs. The pupils had recognized him clearly; they had even noticed a spot on the shoulder of his jacket.

We understand nothing of all this, of course; but there the experience is. A transmission took place. What a number of varied examples!

Admiral Peyron, Treasurer of the Senate, appeared, at the hour of his death, to two different persons in Toulon. Dr. Dariex published the following letter⁸³:

On January 9, 1892, I had gone to bed in Toulon. I felt someone awaken me, and I saw Admiral Peyron standing near my bed, his hands in his pockets; he was pressing his body against mine. He said, "Good-by, P—. I've come to say good-by to you."

I got up, then, and lighted the candle. It was eleven o'clock: the apparition was no longer there. After a quarter of an hour I went back to bed. Scarcely had I begun to fall asleep again, when the admiral pressed against me, as before, repeating his good-by; but a cloud quickly spread over his face, and it was not long before his body disappeared like vapor.

Under the spell of this repeated melancholy apparition, I stayed awake, thinking that the man whose aide de camp I had been, five years previously, had probably just died. As a matter of fact, the evening of the next day, news of his death appeared in the newspaper. He was then living in the Luxembourg Palace, as treasurer of the Senate. I must add that, the day before, I had learned through the same newspaper that he was seriously ill.

Ten months later I related this occurrence to Monsieur G— a naval engineer, who, like me, had been a member of the admiral's general staff, when he was in command of the Mediterranean Cruising Squadron. What was my astonishment, when this superior officer told me that, on the same night, Admiral Peyron had appeared to him, as well, and had said to him: "My dear G—, the time of our parting has come. All must go that way. Good-by." It had startled him into wakefulness.

E. P. N.

Cruiser Captain.

We may seek an explanation of the first impression in the announcement of the illness; but the apparition to two separate, mutually independent witnesses must be taken into account.

The following apparition, also, was seen by two separate persons and by a child as well:

Mr. Hunter had had, as a wet-nurse, a woman who loved him more than her own sons; her name was Mrs. Macfarlane. Upon his marriage, she entered the service of his wife, and was her companion when Mr. Hunter made a trip to the Indies. In the month of June, 1857, Mrs. Hunter went to a watering-place, and left a box of valuables in Mrs. Macfarlane's keeping. One evening in August, Mrs. Hunter was at home, together with several of her friends. She was passing the open door of her room, when she saw a large coffin upon the bed. At its foot an old woman was seated, tall and vigorous; she was gazing fixedly at this same coffin. "At once I retraced my steps," she wrote, "and told my guests of the vision I had had; it was received with great

⁸³ *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1894, p. 11.

shouts of laughter, in which I soon joined.

“In spite of that, what I had seen was real to my eyes, and I could have described the old woman’s garments.

“When my guests had left, I paid a visit, as usual, to the children’s room, and I noticed that the governess seemed agitated and confused. She approached me, and said: ‘Madame, I’m most upset. At seven o’clock this evening I was on my way to the kitchen for water; turning around, I saw an old woman going upstairs; she was tall and strong-looking. I drew aside to let her go by, but there was something so strange about her that I turned around to see where she was going. The door of the drawing-room was open, and she went in that direction; but before catching up with her I saw her suddenly melt, dissolve: I swear to having seen her, and I can also tell absolutely how she was dressed; she was wearing a large black cap on her head, and had a black-and-white cheek shawl over her shoulders.’”

This description corresponded to what Mrs. Hunter had herself seen.

About half an hour afterward, when Mrs. Hunter had gone to bed, she heard her little five-year-old girl scream, and, immediately afterward, the voice of the governess, who was trying to calm her. The next morning the child related that a bad old woman had sat down on the table and had stared at her so hard that she had ended by screaming. The nurse stated that she had seen the child sitting up in bed, wide awake; she was pointing at the table with her little finger, crying, “Go away, go away, bad, ugly old woman!” The nurse saw nothing; she had already been in bed for a short time, and had locked the door of the room.

Some days later letters came from Mrs. Macfarlane’s sons, announcing her death. She had spent the last hours of her life thinking constantly of Mr. Hunter and his family. The nurse, when she learned of this, cried: “Good heavens! It was she whom I saw the other evening, and that was the way she always dressed!”⁸⁴

This apparition is most instructive so far as our research is concerned. It is apparent that, — as in the case of Monsieur Pouzol, related above, and in similar cases — it was not real, objective, external, could not have been photographed, for the vision began with the perception of a coffin, which was not there, either. Mrs. Macfarlane, when dying, thought of Ms. Hunter, her nurse of days gone by, of his wife, of their little daughter, and her thoughts took shape in their minds as a form representing her, clad as she had been, and as a coffin associated with this form. It was a case of telepathic transmission.

What an immense variety there is in all these manifestations! Nevertheless, as might be expected, many of them resemble one another.

The case of Madame Féret of Juvisy (“L’Inconnu,” page 74), recurs, in an almost similar form, in Mrs. Crowe’s work: “Obscure Sides of Nature.”⁸⁵ Here it is:

A Mrs. H—, who lived in Limerick, had, a few years ago, a servant whom she thought a great deal of, Nelly Hanlon. This servant was a most dependable person, who rarely asked for leave; her mistress was, on this account, all the more disposed to grant her a day off when she requested one, in order to go to a fair, some miles distant. But Mr. H— told his wife that she could not be dispensed with, for he had invited some people to dinner on that day, and only Nelly could be entrusted with the keys of the wine-cellar. He added that his business would not allow him to return in time to go for the wine himself.

Mrs. H—, not wishing to disappoint Nelly, to whom she had given her consent, assured her husband that she would, herself, take charge of the wine on the day in question.

Nelly left in the morning; she was in a happy mood; she promised to return in the evening if it were possible and at the latest the morning of the next day.

The day passed without incident, and no one gave her any thought. When the time came to go for the wine, Mrs. H— took the key and went to the cellar stairs, followed by a maid-servant carrying the basket for bottles. Scarcely had she begun to go down the steps, when she uttered a great cry, and fell unconscious. She was carried to her bed, and the girl who had gone with her told the other servants, who were most alarmed, that they had seen Nelly Hanlon at the bottom of the stairs, dripping with water. When Mr. H— arrived, they told him the story; he reprimanded the maid-servant for her foolishness. Mrs. H—, well ministered to, regained consciousness. As she was opening her eyes, she sighed deeply, and cried, “Oh, Nelly Hanlon!” Then she confirmed what the servant had said: she had seen Nelly at the bottom of the cellar stairs, dripping as though she had got out of the water. Mr. H— did everything in the world to prove to his wife that it had been only an illusion, but in vain. “Nelly,” he said, “will soon come in, and make fun of you.” But his wife remained convinced that the servant was dead.

Night came, then morning, but without news. Two or three days went by. They made inquiries, and learned that Nelly had been seen at the fair, and had left for home toward evening. After that time, all traces of her were absolutely lost. A search led at last to the discovery of her body in the river, but it was never known how the catastrophe occurred.

This vision, the reality of which is not to be doubted, must have taken place after the drowning, since the

⁸⁴ See *Proceedings Soc. Psychical Research*, p. 129. *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, 1907, p. 631.

⁸⁵ Chapter vi. on *Wraiths*, p. 179.

victim was seen, by the two narrators, to be dripping with water. The vision occurred, doubtless, immediately after the accident, which must have happened in the evening.

I shall not seek to explain it, any more than I shall seek to explain Madame Féret's vision. She saw in her cellar the corpse of her cousin, who had died in the Crimea on that same day, during the war of 1855. We cannot solve the problem of these visions, but we are forced to admit their reality. They are the elements of a new science.

To deny the abundantly proved facts as to apparitions at the moment of death is to deny the light of day.

It is time to end this chapter; but it is not without regret that a large number of revelatory observations are omitted. Here is still another, not less authentic than the preceding ones.

The Reverend C. Wambey, of Paragon, Salisbury County, England, wrote to the Society for Psychological Research, in April, 1884:

I had been on very intimate terms with my friend B— before he left England, having been appointed Professor of Mathematics at Elizabeth College in Guernsey. About ten years afterward I accepted a temporary position in this island, and resumed relations with my old friend. I spent part of my time with him almost every day.

After my return to England, I corresponded regularly with him. In the last letter I received from him, he spoke of his health and told me that he was unusually well.

One morning I saddened my wife by assuring her that my friend was dead, and that he had appeared to me during the night. She tried to comfort me by suggesting that it was an illusion due to my state of health; I had been unwell for some time. I answered that so far as I was concerned there was no doubt as to the demise.

Some days later I received a letter edged with black, bearing a Guernsey stamp. In this letter Mrs. B— told me that her husband had died after being unwell for only a few hours, and that he had spoken of me with concern. His death took place the night on which he had appeared to me.

The investigation made by the Psychic Society brought out the fact that Mrs. Wambey retained a precise recollection of what her husband had said, on that morning.

We must end this account, despite the revelatory interest of all these facts. I have so many *positive observations* before my eyes that it might be prolonged indefinitely. Apparitions and manifestations of the dying are as numerous as they are varied, and all of them enlighten us. But the limits first assigned to this volume have already been exceeded.

I owe the success of this work to the sympathetic collaboration of my readers, who for so many years have deemed it a pleasure and a duty to send me accounts of precise observations which have come to their knowledge,—accounts helpful in the study of the soul and its survival after death. I hereby wish to express my deep gratitude to all those who have collaborated in this work of investigation and enlightenment. I cannot write to them individually, but I desire to express to them my sincere thanks.

I believe myself justified in being more severe in the last pages of this volume than in the first, in describing the state of mind of obdurate deniers. Do you not think dear readers that one must be — how shall I put it? — blind, deaf, or something worse, to continue to reject the evidence?

The facts published in this volume are as convincing as they are unquestionable.

It was on the comparison of observations that astronomy, the most positive of sciences, was founded. *It will be the same with psychic science*, and this is the only method by which to attain to a knowledge of truth.

All these observations prove that a human being does not consist only of a body that is visible, tangible, ponderable, known to everyone in general, and to physicians in particular; it consists, likewise, of a psychic element that is imponderable, gifted with special, intrinsic faculties, capable of functioning apart from the physical organism and of manifesting itself at a distance with the aid of forces as to the nature of which we are still ignorant. This psychic element is not subject to the every-day restrictions of time and space.

On the other hand, present-day experiments in wireless telegraphy and wireless telephony have established the fact that the atmosphere by which we are surrounded and permeated is constantly traversed by ether-waves which pass through walls. These waves do not become perceptible to our senses until they are caught by special apparatus attuned with their vibrations; we live perpetually, night and day, in the midst of an invisible world.

The psychic occurrences here investigated show us, beyond doubt, that at the moment of death a subtle shock, unknown in its nature, at times affects those at a distance who are connected with the dying person in some way. This connection is not always that of sympathy. The ether-wave, or electro-magnetic projection, gives rise to physical phenomena and mental impressions. These emissions are automatic, usually involuntary, and are comparable to electric vibrations which may accompany the sundering of earthly bonds. In the matter of inquiring into these observed phenomena, we are at present in a state

of ignorance comparable to that of the astronomers who preceded Copernicus and Galileo. For them the Earth was at the center of a closed universe: their system was geocentric and anthropocentric. Physiological science has taught, up to the present, that thought is a product of the brain, while in reality it is psychic force which governs life.

In the observations which have just passed before our eyes, incarnate souls manifested themselves, — souls of the living. Nevertheless we have asked ourselves, more than once, if we were not in certain cases dealing with persons already dead, already beyond the boundary line. Our third part will be given over to this special study, — to the investigation of phenomena which have occurred after departure from this earthly halting-place: manifestations and apparitions of the dead, several minutes, several hours after dissolution; or several days, several weeks, several months, or even several years after. Everything will be painstakingly sifted, investigated, verified. Our scientific method will be the same. There will be no mere words, no metaphysical dissertations, but *facts*.

Let us, then, end this second volume, reserving for the third all that does not appear attributable to the living, all that seems to belong to the realm of the dead. In considering the foregoing examples, indeed, we have had doubts as to the origin of certain manifestations, and have had reason to think that several followed dissolution, instead of accompanying or preceding it; we admitted as much. When a person comes to announce his death to us appears spontaneously and tells us, "*I am dead*," it would seem that this affirmation might suffice to convince us that he really is dead. Nevertheless, we have seen that we should not be justified in drawing this conclusion, since such declarations have at times preceded dissolution.

In the matter of the examples we are now to investigate, there will no longer be any doubt: the dead themselves will speak to us, in a language which we must interpret.

This second part of our trilogy has made us *certain* of the reality of phantasms of the living, of apparitions and manifestations of the dying. The pages just read have already made us feel that these manifestations, these apparitions, stretch beyond the grave. We now reach the door of the temple which has been closed, up to the present, to human exploration. Shall we obtain the same authentic proofs, the same *certainty* as to the real existence of the dead?

Let us enter the arena fearlessly, and look squarely at the most absorbing of spectacles.

We know, henceforth, that spiritual Man exists, that he is relatively independent of material Man. Material Man dies; spiritual Man does not. What are his posthumous manifestations? What is his ultra-terrestrial state? That is what we shall endeavor to determine in our third volume.