

SOME THOUGHTS ON MEDIUMSHIP

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"In love, and only in love, can we wring spiritual victory out of the defeat of the body?"—

"My Chinese Marriage"; by M. T. E.

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FOREWORD

A **MEDIUM** is a person who possesses, to a more or less developed extent, a faculty which, though it probably exists in germ, has not risen to any considerable or useful magnitude in the average of mankind. It appears to be no more widely distributed than musical, artistic, or mathematical faculty; but it also appears to be just as real as they are, and in a few individuals to be highly developed. All these things are natural gifts, which may be cultivated in those who possess them and cannot be cultivated otherwise.

I am often asked why a medium is necessary for the purposes of communication. I reply that a medium is necessary even if you want to send or receive a telegram: you require either an instrument or an operator or both. Ordinary people require an operator both at the sending and receiving end: and so it is also in psychic communications. Bereaved people and those who have gone over may possibly have the faculty themselves, but usually have not: a skilled operator is needed on both sides. Why is it that one goes to a concert to hear a skilled performer on the violin, or a famous singer? Why not play or sing oneself? The question answers itself.

At the present time, when the faculty is not understood and hardly believed in, a great many harsh things are said about mediums. The faculty can be imitated; its possession can be simulated by unscrupulous and fraudulent persons. I doubt if there are many such; but there are many who, having a trace of the faculty, imagine that they have more than a trace, and eke out their small power by various devices which, though perhaps begun innocently, may soon degenerate into fraud. Many mediums, however, I know who are scrupulously honest, who shut themselves off from normal sources of information and depend entirely on what comes to them through ill-understood and mainly unconscious modes of access. It is no use attempting to legislate or lay down beforehand what is possible and impossible in such a case. The scope of the faculty must be ascertained by experiment and observation, and it certainly does in some

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cases go far beyond what we could normally think likely or possible.

There are many grades of honest and sincere mediumship, and few individuals, perhaps none, have the power of attaining results of every kind. Some can only

produce physiological or physical phenomena; some are open to telepathic impressions; some have the gift of clairvoyance; and some can psychometrize, that is to say, can obtain impressions from objects or letters when handled by them; some again have the power of finding hidden objects, such as water. Each has his or her own peculiar sensitiveness; and in a few these gifts are combined.

It is sometimes said that the majority of mediums are comparatively uneducated people. It is equally true to say that the majority of mankind is comparatively uneducated. The two statements are probably identical; and if the faculty is distributed in accordance with the laws of probability, then, like the exceptional power of arithmetical calculation possessed by a few people, we shall find it in all grades of society; we have no reason to suppose that higher education is a necessary condition.

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A few amateur mediums known to me are highly-educated people, but naturally they are rare. Again, a few are in fortunate pecuniary circumstances, and are able to remain amateurs and preserve their anonymity, only permitting their gift to be utilized by friends, or by outsiders as a matter of charity and sympathy and fellow feeling. Some there are who begin in that way and then gradually find that the demands on their time interfere with their other modes of earning a living, and find it necessary to charge a fee. They thus become technically professional; and again, there are some who become really professional and manage to live, at any rate meagrely, on the exercise of their special and highly-developed gift. No reasonable objection can be urged against such a course; in the present state of society it is inevitable. People have a right to live by their profession, and those who make use of their services should consider themselves fortunate in being able to remunerate them without undue qualms and delicacy, just as they pay a fee to any other consultant.

If humanity were wiser and better informed than it is at present, it is probable that some arrangement would be made for relieving sensitives from this necessity, which is always distasteful, and enabling them to cultivate their powers in peace and quietness without the constant struggling against adverse circumstances. We are so far from that state at present, and we inherit so much evil tradition from the past, that the exercise of this beneficent faculty, which has proved so great a comfort to bereaved people during and since the War, is, strictly speaking, illegal. Accordingly an extra and artificial anxiety is introduced among both mediums and those who make use of them and investigate them for scientific purposes; they have to be constantly on their guard against spies and informers and the risk of prosecution—a kind of unintentional blasphemy. The risk of possible abuse thus tends to keep the subject in a kind of furtive atmosphere and retard its natural development. Persecution, however, does not stop though it does hinder and hamper the pursuit. Humanity cannot stop the influx of

truth, though it can retard it. Christianity, for 11 conducted secretly because of the prevalence of persecution.

I am often asked what sort of people mediums

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are, how they became aware of their faculty, and how the exercise of it appears to them. They are now going to be told at firsthand

Miss Bazett is a lady who, after many years of varied educational work, discovered during the War that she had the psychometrizing faculty strongly developed; so she allowed me and my friend, J. Arthur Hill, and probably a few others, to inform her of cases of distress in various parts of the world, and to send such objects as would put her sufficiently *en rapport* with the people concerned to enable her to get the required information. In that way, to take only one instance, a bereaved lady living in Australia was able to get news of members of her family killed in the War, with a mass of verified detail which proved the information to be genuine.

The number of such cases has now reached many hundreds, and the demands of this work have necessitated the giving up of Miss Bazett's former profession. The calls on her time are now considerable, and she has become willing to receive a fee for her service in each case. She belongs, therefore, to the intermediate class, not professional in the same sense as

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Mrs. Leonard and other of the more famous mediums, but still not strictly any longer an amateur.

Recently, she has thought it her duty to explain the way in which she exercises the faculty, so far as she can, and give some general impression of the mind of a medium, and how it appears to her that the information comes.

That is the object of the present book. It will answer many of the reasonable questions which people ask; and it will be a help even to scientific investigators, although by experience they have grown gradually to understand and appreciate some of these conditions. We, however, only gain the information at second-hand: it is well to have a statement at first-hand from one who does possess the faculty. So I commend this book to inquirers of every grade, as a reasonable and straightforward

human document, illustrating the mind of the medium, and to some extent throwing light upon the process.

We have still much to learn about the details before a definite theory can be formulated; but as a working hypothesis in the mind of investigators the spiritualistic hypothesis holds the field. It may be regarded as a

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normal extension of human faculty, a kind of telepathy *in excelsis* or it may be regarded as a definite channel for intercommunion between those in the two states or conditions of existence—the incarnate and the discarnate state—i.e., between those still associated with matter and those who have been emancipated from that temporary condition. On such a subject dogmatism is out of place; we have to learn from, and be guided by, the facts. Those who are not familiar with any of the facts will not be interested; but those who have become acquainted with the facts will be glad of information from one of those through whom the facts have been rendered accessible.

Our present corporate attitude to mediums is thoroughly bad. The difficult conditions under which these people work are pointed out in Chapter IV of this book. They are necessarily hypersensitive, and they have had to encounter a steady bombardment of opposition both from their families and from the general public. There is a real risk that some of them will become what public opinion considers them to be; for any man except the strongest is liable to become what he is expected to become. Rough treatment may drive even an ordinary

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person into crime; and similarly a sensitive may be driven into devious ways of deception and fraud.

We are not free from responsibility in this matter. Those who happen to be economically independent protect themselves by keeping their psychic endowment secret; but those who are constrained to come out into the open, in order to confer on humanity the benefit of their special endowment, have often to struggle against adverse circumstances in order to preserve their integrity among the influences of suspicion and accusation by which they are surrounded, and to which they are naturally more sensitive than are the hard-shelled, more isolated and self-sufficient people who do the main work of the world.

If the power exists (and few of those who have really studied the matter have any doubt about that) then it is a power to be used; and when humanity has learnt how to use it wisely and veil, there may be no limit to the advantage which we shall gain from a wider comprehension of the universe, and a better understanding of the problems of life and death, which, whether we will or no, confront us all.

OLIVER LODGE.

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SOME THOUGHTS

ON

MEDIUMSHIP

CHAPTER I

MEDIUMSHIP AND THE MEDIUM

THE practice of mediumship, around which a storm of divergent public opinion has raged for a considerable time, has come to be recognized as a factor in human life to-day; this is probably due, in large measure, to the publication of such authoritative works as **Dr. Osty's** "Supernormal Faculties in Man", **and** the three volumes by Camille Flammarion, to mention only two out of many books along these lines.

Such works as these have enlightened public opinion on the real nature of mediumship, as apart from the distorted conception of it which had arisen from an ignorant and superstitious use of supernormal powers.

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Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, in her invaluable little book, "The Faculty of Communion", writes that "The time has come when a distinction must be made between a power and its misuse, between a practice and its degradation. . . . The misuse of a power is often confused with the power itself, and the whole rejected as bad; as well might the owner of a cracked flute say that all music is discordant sound".

The kind of mediumship which I am attempting to analyse in this little book is what is known as mental mediumship, i.e., clairvoyance, clairaudience, impressional perception, etc., as these form part of my own psychic equipment.

I have myself no capacity for such mediumship as would produce physical phenomena of the nature of materializations, levitations, moving of material objects, and the like.

I have recorded some of my own psychic experiences, because I feel the importance of such experiences being reported by the percipient himself, in addition to the records made by scientists of phenomena observed and tested by them. Personal experiences have, after all, a value of their own, though this is

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impaired by an unavoidable tinge of personal bias. The scientist, on the other hand, though he has the incalculable advantage of making an unbiased observation of the facts, is obliged, in the nature of the case, to stand outside the facts which he observes.

In the interests of truth, it is surely desirable that the data from both these sources should come under observation, and be made available to the general inquirer.

There is a distinct lack of records by those who possess psychic powers; and it is by no means easy to analyse and criticize these subtle forces, of which very little is yet understood even by those who possess them.

The natural reluctance of the sensitive, or medium, to make his experiences known, is not likely to be lessened by the current ideas concerning mediumship in general.

An American doctor has recently put forward opinions which are only a little more emphatic than those of many others. He states that "Every medium has been detected in, or has confessed to, trickery. The exceptions are only apparent, and prove the rule. Careful investigation has always led to exposure. . . .

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All the mediums have been highly-strung, nervous individuals, who have almost invariably exhibited the traits of hysteria".

In addition to these defects, many critics would add instability, excitability, inordinate conceit, hypersensitiveness, and lack of sincerity. These traits are, unfortunately, common to many types of persons whose general development is still in a very elementary stage, at which the instincts rule supreme, and no sublimation of these to higher levels is as yet understood.

The fact that the mediumistic person is acutely sensitive only emphasizes his natural characteristics, and throws them into sharper relief, whether they be of the elementary and instinctive kind, or of the calibre which denotes the more developed character and personality.

These stages of development are described by Dr. Maurice Bucke, in "Cosmic Consciousness", as the higher and the lower mind.

"The lower mind," he says, "lacks faith, lacks courage, lacks personal force, lacks sympathy, lacks affection; that is (to sum up) it lacks peace, content, happiness. It is prone

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to fear of things known, and still more to vague terror of things unknown; it is prone to anger, rage, hatred; that is (again to sum up) to unrest, discontent, unhappiness. On the other hand, (the higher mind, as compared with the lower, possesses faith, courage, personal force, sympathy, affection; that is, it possesses, relatively, happiness; it is less prone to fear of things known and unknown, to anger and hatred, that is, to unhappiness."

It is evident that the defects commonly attributed to mediums are, after all, the natural products of the "lower mind" as described above; and fear is a very marked characteristic of the lower type of medium, who dreads the powers of which he is in possession. It can easily be imagined that mediumship exercised under the domination of fear may become devastating in its results, even terminating, in extreme cases, in mental and moral derangement.

On the higher levels of mediumship, it is at least worth consideration whether a strong affinity exists between the mystic, the artist, and the medium, as to certain basic qualities, quite apart from their development and manifestation. All three endeavour to transcend

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the limitations of objective life; all are in the highest degree sensitive to mental and physical conditions.

The description given by Dr. Geley of the natural make-up of a medium—"suggestibility, hypersensitiveness, instability of temperament, capricious and fiery character"—is, perhaps, as applicable to the artistic and mystic temperaments as to that of the medium. In any case, the description is of general tendencies, which are subject to great variety in the individual.

Dr. Geley reminds us that "all the great mediums have been born mediums and have died mediums", and that in the early days the development of their gift depends largely upon practice and training, as in the case of artists in early life.

It has been suggested that there is a need for some correlation of these allied gifts of mysticism, mediumship, and art; if studied collectively, and in relation to each other, much light might be shed on each and on all.

It was once my good fortune to meet an individual who possessed a delightful blending of these three gifts; a man of ripe age, who

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wrote mystic poetry, composed music, and was a powerful psychic; perhaps the mystic factor predominated. The face was remarkably beautiful in expression, and one wished that there existed more of his kind. In the process of evolution, may we anticipate that this shall be ?

It is a recognized fact that in certain states of clairvoyance, the artistic and aesthetic faculties are greatly heightened, and I can myself testify to the truth of this. This fact is but one link in what one feels should be a chain of observed similarities in these three fields of experience.

Sir William Osier has described the " dreamers of dreams and seers of visions" in more gracious terms than some others of his profession, in that he speaks of them as "brothers of Sir Galahad and sisters of Sir Percival", adding that his interest is the outcome of much work amongst them.

Such a sympathetic judgment is rarely found, owing to the irreconcilable differences in temperament and outlook which bias the opinions of men. ⁴⁴ Across the centuries contend with one another the men of method and of discipline, and the men of vision."

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Dr. Hyslop reminds us that "our normal isolation from the transcendental world is only our inability to be stimulated by it"; and this may largely account for one type of person being entirely unable to understand or enter into the experiences of another.

A further instance of this gulf between one mind and another is the existence of the two distinct types described by Professor Jung, the psychologist, as the introvert and the extrovert. The latter has his consciousness directed outward to the world; his interest and attention follow objective happenings, and those of his immediate surroundings, and his actions are governed by the influence of persons and things.

Such a person has no serious tendency to transcend the bounds of objective life or objective occurrences. He does not expect to find absolute values in his own inner life; the only ones he knows are those outside himself.

The mentality of the introvert is the exact antithesis of what has here been described, which is, after all, a materialistic mentality. What common ground could there be for such widely divergent types?

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A very common idea about the condition necessary for mental mediumship is that the subject should "make his mind a perfect blank", or try to induce a negative and passive state.

The right kind of passivity is emphatically *not* a state of mere vacancy, with its liability to entertain any passing impression, receiving it without due judgment or inhibition.

The psychic who takes up this negative attitude is liable to foretell mainly death, disaster, and calamity, or to dwell unduly upon bodily illness, giving far too great prominence to these things, and failing to present psychic reality in its nobler aspects. It will be noticed that this mental attitude is symptomatic of the "lower mind" described by Bucke.

Such a psychic (or sensitive) lays himself open to grave risks of disintegration and dissociation of personality, and also to a draining of vitality. Much of the depletion experienced by sensitives is, I feel sure, the result of falling into this frame of mind, and exercising the psychic faculties whilst in such a condition.

The psychic who works on a higher mental level largely avoids this depletion, and should,

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indeed, find refreshment in the normal exercise of a natural gifts

If these commonsense facts were as well understood by all sensitives as they are by doctors and students of psychology, much of the pathological trouble which arises from an ignorant use of mediumship would be avoided.

The risks of dissociation which have been already mentioned are only too familiar to those who have to deal with mental pathology; but Dr. Morton Prince, a recognized authority on the subject, maintains that we are wrong in thinking that dissociation is *always* pathological; it is so only in its extreme forms. Dissociation is met with, he says, in dreams and in reverie, but those states are not therefore termed pathological .

Dr. Julia Seton, herself a psychic and a medical woman, shows the importance of learning how to dissociate safely, and indicates the stages of the process.

In order to induce the necessary receptive attitude, it is essential to create a sense of stillness, and to maintain silence; this silence brings a great psychical perception; a man puts his conscious self to sleep, then consciously

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awakens himself into a supreme activity. This stillness should pass right into the sensitive, until all external stimulus is inhibited. In the process of attaining to this condition, many psychics experience physical sensations of varying kinds, such as nervous tremors, shuddering, fluctuating temperature, and the like. Then follows a further stage, characterized by a sense of bodily comfort, and one has arrived, as it were, at a half-way house. It is necessary to pass through this half-hypnotic state in which the body feels comfortable, but it is not a state in which to linger. Those who do so are babes in the experience of the higher psychic levels. This place is but the sleep-state of the subconscious faculties, but the supra levels of mind must be dominated before the transcendental states of consciousness can be attained.

This subjective process is the first step across a vast field, and it is whilst in this state that the sensitive begins to touch the realm of greater possibilities, and to break away from his objective surroundings. To the mystic, this plane of consciousness is familiar, and it is here that inspiration is born. Those who possess the

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intuitive faculty will do well to approach the object of-their contemplation not with a feeling of excitement in presence of the unknown, but rather of quiet expectation, providing an atmosphere in which the higher manifestations of personality are made possible [

I have given Dr. Seton's description of the process of dissociation, because it bears out my own experience in every respect; no doubt, the process varies with different sensitives.

It is interesting to compare Dr. William Brown's description of the mystic state with that of the mediumistic condition described above; the kinship between them is at once apparent. Dr. Brown writes:—"If one lies passive on a couch, with the eyes closed, and all voluntary muscles relaxed, and breathes slowly and deeply, one may feel oneself slipping away from the world of clear consciousness, losing the feeling of orientation and sensibility in the limbs. The body seems to be floating in the air, and, later on, one may feel that one does not possess a body at all. In this state, one seems to be depersonalized, and absorbed into the 'all', into the soul of the universe".

Dr. Osty reminds us that "human life has

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been imprisoned", and another writer (Mr. Stephen Graham) maintains that "the world affords no more adequate scope for our spirits than St. Helena did for Napoleon".

In the sphere of biological science, the same move towards expansion and transcendence appears to be taking place, as has been made dear by Professor Julian Huxley in his "Essays of a Biologist". He says: "The direction of life may be roughly summed up in the words 'more life' "... and "More matter has been stolen from the lifeless, and embodied in the living".

Is it not possible that imprisoned humanity may be liberated, and may rise on the twin wings of its intuitive gifts, i.e., mysticism and mediumship ? The former, by reason of its age-long association with the divine, has been kept unsullied. The latter, on the other hand, has to force itself out of very different associations, and to prove that it is capable of higher manifestations.

Many of those who exhibit mystic and mediumistic powers realize that life is indissolubly one, and that they should be able to function as easily on the transcendental plane as on

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that which is common to the rest of humanity, because, ideally, both spheres are equally their own.

Most of the great mystics and many of the great mediums have been known to be very practical people in ordinary life, proving their realization of the truth so well brought out by a modern Indian writer, who says: "To us, the natural is but a projection of the supernatural, and the supernatural but the continuation of the natural. All experiences are both; I think that they are not contradictory terms".

CHAPTER II

SOME POSSIBILITIES OF

MEDIUMSHIP

"THE human mind," says Professor Richet, "is in possession here and now of other sources of cognition than the normal senses," and Dr. Osty supports and amplifies this statement when he maintains that "beyond the conscious is found ability to perceive the normally imperceptible and to know the normally unknowable".

It is the possession of these obscure powers, even in embryo, that makes mediumship and spirit-communication in any degree possible. On the other hand, the very possession of these powers makes it hard to discern the dividing line between the exercise of one's own higher psychic functions and the receiving of ideas from discarnate intelligences.

It is probable that a considerable number of alleged spirit-communications are produced

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within the limits of the medium's own subconscious mind, or by telepathic contact with the minds of other living persons still on earth. Most of the difficulties connected with medium-ship are traceable to these sources.

In spite of these difficulties and many others, it does appear, under certain given conditions, that it *is* possible to come into contact with discarnate minds. Evidence of this kind must, of course, be cumulative; single instances taken alone have very little value.

I must remind my readers at this point that I am attempting no general account of the possibilities of mediumship, but am recounting how it has been possible to understand and use it in my own particular case.

In my own experience of supernormal powers, it is only gradually that one becomes aware of the fact that one is able to perceive what is hidden from others. As a child, such experiences seem to be quite natural, and it is only in adult life that one

fully realizes the line of demarcation between those who possess such powers and those who do not.

I have given an account in my first book, "After-Death Communications", of the earlier

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manifestations of these powers in my own life. I did not associate these perceptions with any power of reaching discarnate personalities; but a great need which arose to get into touch with a relation of my own after his sudden death, seemed to stimulate these powers, which I had hitherto made no attempt to use.

From that time (1916) these gifts have greatly increased, owing to frequent exercise of them during a time of unparalleled sorrow and need.

It is a common fallacy to suppose that a person endowed with mediumistic gifts can exercise these at any moment, and under any conditions, e.g., in a crowded drawing-room, or at a time when the affairs of ordinary life are occupying a prominent place in one's attention; or at a time of great physical or mental fatigue.

To shut out the objective world to the extent that is necessary for mental mediumship involves great concentration and inhibition of any disturbing factor. Stability of attention is of the very first importance for registering such subtle and elusive impressions.

Professor Hyslop, who has done much to elucidate the processes of spirit-communication,

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asserts that "the whole process must be organized and protected in an intelligent way".

To a certain extent, this is absolutely necessary; but the very nature of the gifts precludes any rigid organization of them, as in the case of artistic endowments.

The great need seems to be to understand the laws underlying psychic phenomena, and to organize along lines which are akin to their own essential principles. In trying to regulate these phenomena, we have been inclined to impose conditions which are applicable to our life here, because that is within our own experience; with the result that the object of our study eludes us at every turn!

Kreisler, the musician, affirmed that, on the subject of "practising", musicians were positively superstitious! "This grinding and dulling of the mind is little short of

insanity!" he exclaimed. "I can't *practise* for more than an hour at a time. I can *play* five hours at a time; but *practise!*"

Thomas Sharnol, writing on originality and inspiration, argued that "if it is a law that concentration must not be prolonged when good results are sought for, it is also a mental

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law that inspirations depend on a certain amount of disciplined labour". Perhaps these arguments are as applicable to psychic phenomena, if they are to be demonstrated naturally and easily along their own lines of development.

With regard to concentration not being prolonged if good results are sought, the effect on a medium of too-long concentration is disastrously near the effect produced upon a wineglass by Caruso's persistent singing of one note in its direction, until the glass was shivered to pieces. Experiments with physical phenomena have brought this home to the experimenters in many cases, as physical results are more apparent than those on a mental plane.

Most mediums possess one or two psychic powers, such as automatic writing and clairvoyance; but no one medium has so far manifested *all*. Dr. Osty suggests that, in the future, it is a logical possibility that one human being may exhibit all these powers in combination.

At present, very little indeed is understood of what constitutes good mental and spiritual conditions in which to receive spirit-communication. We know that the very essence of what is needed is to be *en rapport* with the person

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desiring to communicate, both mentally, spiritually, and psychically^ Very seldom in our ordinary life does one come into such threefold contact with another personality, even with those whom we know best. When it is remembered that, in mediumship, it is usually a stranger whom one is endeavouring to contact, such a threefold *rapport* is a tremendous attempt to make.

One may be mentally in touch with the stranger with small difficulty; but psychically or spiritually, one may be poles apart from him, and in this case the lines of communication can only with great difficulty be kept open. A sympathetic desire on the part of the medium to give help to the bereaved may maintain the effort; but along the lines of laboured effort, it is not to be expected that the best communications shall come; these move on the impulse of spontaneity alone.

In some cases, the temperaments of the medium and communicator are so incompatible that it is surprising if *any* communication is given; if such persons had met in earth life, their conversation would have been of the scantiest, and speedily terminated; the fact that

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one of them is deprived of his physical body does not alter this situation.

On the other hand, there are rare occasions| when the touch with another mind, even that of a stranger, is wonderfully spontaneous and complete, making possible the receiving of messages of which accurate verification proves the value.

In normal life, as we experience it here, communication by means of speech or writing forms only a part—in many cases a small part—of our intercourse with each other. Those who are in closest touch on earth frequently maintain silence together, in which their intercourse transcends the limitations of speech.

When psychic contact with a discarnate person is sympathetically established, the same principles appear to hold good, in that the medium and communicator may hold intercourse on a transcendental level. It has been possible, in my experience, to convey this sense of communion to one who is bereaved, more especially when, as sometimes happens, he is present when the communication is received. An unmistakable atmosphere is created, in

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which the sense of close touch with the departed is a real experience, and the pain of separation is temporarily, and even permanently, relieved. This level of communication is not too frequently attained in this life, or in the life beyond, and depends in large measure upon the quality of the personalities concerned, as well as the means of communication employed.

As in all creative work intuition and imagination play a large part, so do they also in helping to make conditions harmonious for an unseen communicator.

In my own case, he is confronted with two strangers, my recorder and myself, no relative or friend of his own being usually present to establish a link with any familiar personal associations. So strong is the link of associated ideas, that without such aid he must necessarily find it difficult to lay aside the sense of the unfamiliar and to step again in thought into his home surroundings. Only the impetus given by his love for those at home, and the sympathetic intuition which enables the medium to help him, can overcome these difficulties and make reunion possible in this specialized sense, even for one precious hour.

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The scope of communication between the two minds at work may be fairly comprehensive; but difficulties of transmission hamper it on every hand. In my own case, the factor that is least affected in transmission appears to be the character and temperament of the communicator, which reveals itself sometimes in a remarkably full degree. The character stands out in great clearness of detail and subtlety of delineation; it is obvious that the communicator himself is not voluntarily imparting this knowledge, but it is, perhaps, given involuntarily and unconsciously, reminding one of the well-known saying: "What you *are* is shouting so loudly, that I cannot hear what you *say*".

The man's character and temperament are of the very essence of his personality, and because of this, some aspect of it can be perceived at any time during the sitting, but a variety of definite statements which he may wish to make for purposes of identification is far more difficult to register.

Might one reason for this be that these statements have no relation to each other, and are detached from their mental setting and the

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ideas connected with them in the communicator's own mind? Moreover, they involve a very definite memory-process, whilst this is not the case where character and temperament are concerned.

Not only is his personal character revealed, but his relations with others are also shown, once more in a way in which he would not consciously or voluntarily present them. Perhaps, again, the reason for this is that these relationships have played so vital a part in the total of his personal experience that they have become an integral part of him.

The value for identification, both of the statements and the character-drawing, is apparent; but too much emphasis is often laid upon the isolated statements. Those who seek evidence of the identity of a departed friend almost invariably demand proof of this kind ... "If he could tell me what I was doing last Friday, I should consider that evidence of his identity".

The attempt to obtain this test may fail completely, but a long and accurate description may be given of the communicator's character and temperament, which should in itself

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constitute proof of identity to anyone who knows him well. It is more than likely; however, to be laid aside as worthless, and the sitting voted a failure, owing to the common habit of estimating proof in terms of correct statements atone.

Not only may a man's character, temperament, and relations with others be clearly indicated, but a very distinct idea is often formed of his special pursuits and interests, and the dominant purpose of his life. This is partially shown by characteristic expressions, movements and gestures, the use of certain phrases, and even peculiar intonations clairaudiently heard.

One may see clairvoyantly the way in which a man taps with his pencil when concentrating, or such an odd habit as a sudden flexing of the knees followed by a quick straightening, which was peculiar to a certain doctor when making emphatic remarks.

There are characteristic ways of wearing clothing which are an identification in themselves.

The various expressions of a sense of humour are, again, often quite sufficient to identify different men.

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Telepathy from living minds is the usual explanation of such impressions being received. It has to be remembered that, in my own case, the communicators and their relations are, almost without exception, entire strangers. They do not come to see me, but write from various parts of this country and others, asking me to get into touch with some departed friend on their behalf; sometimes the request is made through a third person. They have no knowledge of when the sitting is to take place, and may wait for months after writing to me-

The only information that I ask from strangers is the full name and date of death of the one from whom communication is desired. If any information beyond this is given in the preliminary letter, it is carefully noted in estimating the value of any evidential matter received.

In many cases, the experiments have been carried out with only the knowledge of the person's name and date of death.

I have stressed the comparative ease with which character, temperament, and the like, may be communicated; but I have also received

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a mass of verified communication on quite other lines, with which I hope to deal in a later book.

Some communicators endeavour to describe the conditions of life after death, and their experience of this appears to be as varied as their power to apprehend.

All agree as to life there being more abundant, more interesting, activity greater, help and opportunity towards higher progress more accessible than on earth. Those whose aesthetic and artistic sense has already been awakened describe their appreciation of the heightened effect of colour, light, form, and atmospheric conditions.

The sense of spiritual values is, in many cases, greatly intensified, and the understanding of such divine qualities as love, joy, peace, is raised to an infinitely higher degree than can be experienced during earth life.

One cannot emphasize too strongly the impression which is gained from these communications, that the life beyond is to each man what he is able to apprehend of it.

To such a man as the one described by Mr. Clutton Brock in "Simpson's Choice", his surroundings after death had the familiar

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appearance of his old mansion in Cromwell Road!

We are reminded of Maeterlinck's remark that "nothing happens to us which is not of the same nature as ourselves", and Dean Inge's far-sighted assertion that "what we love, that we see; and what we see, that we are".

The power to foresee the future appears to vary with individual communicators; some can foresee in minutest detail what is to come, whilst others indicate it in very general terms.

One is fully aware that these prophecies may be the outcome of the medium's own supernormal powers exercised in that direction, or may be given by the discarnate mind purporting to communicate them. Our knowledge of mental processes is still too much in its infancy to enable us to draw an accurate line of demarcation where the subtle interaction of one mind upon another is concerned. Even within the province of our own individual minds, we have tried, and failed, to mark off the territory known as conscious and subconscious. We are now leaning towards the assumption that no such fixed line exists, the subconscious being but the shifting horizon

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of the conscious, and depending for its inconstant boundary upon the focus of attention at a given moment.

The conditions of life after death, and future events, are both normally beyond our present knowledge, and statements concerning these must wait until time shall disclose their accuracy or otherwise.

On the other hand, numerous observations concerning current events and persons now living are made in these messages, which are therefore capable of more or less immediate verification, either direct or indirect.

The critic may again attribute information thus gained to the working of the medium's own supernormal powers; but here the factor of selection makes its own claim for consideration, and greatly assists in the difficult task of differentiation. "Who selects?" is the debatable question.

Who selects, from the material available, just those events which belong to the memory of a particular individual? Who expresses the opinions formed out of his life-experience, the hopes and fears peculiar to his temperament, the problems and interests which have occupied

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his mind for, perhaps, half a lifetime? These may come through different channels of medium-ship, at different times and places, often with a lapse of years between. Messages are sent to different people of his acquaintance, bringing out clearly any special relationship with each. To each, he makes appropriate mention of mutual friends, groups or individuals, whom he has met in spirit-life. The *tout ensemble* centres only in himself, the now discarnate personality; in *his* mind alone are all these elements found in combination. A message sent to his parents may contain references which they themselves cannot verify, but must refer to others who possess the required knowledge.

All the messages, covering several years, perhaps, and coming through different sensitives, bear the unmistakable impress of this individual's personality and mode of thought, manifested under different aspects, and for different purposes.

These considerations can hardly fail to carry weight, when the same characteristic of selection is observed amongst a great number of alleged communications,

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The foregoing gives, in barest outline, a few of the main possibilities of spirit-communication through mediumistic channels. The limitations of these are everywhere apparent; but the patient study of recorded facts and a steadfast love of truth will make possible in the future developments of which only the rudimentary potentialities are at present manifested.

CHAPTER III

SOME LIMITATIONS OF MEDIUMSHIP

OUR intercourse with one another in the material world in which we live is largely carried on by means of our normal faculties, especially those of sight, hearing, and speech. These have been developed through the whole lifetime of the individual, to say nothing of their gradual growth during the life-history of the race.

When we strive to get into communication with someone in a non-material world, we necessarily depend upon our psychic senses, especially clairvoyance and clairaudience, whose history of development on any but the most elementary level is comparatively recent. If one adds to this the fact that the whole complicated mechanism of brain and its connection with speech is no longer available for communication, and that our knowledge of the psychic apparatus by which it is replaced is

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largely conjectural, some of the limitations of mediumship are at once apparent.

We know little enough in ordinary life of the actual process by which thought is transmitted from one mind to another, although much has been discovered with regard to the interruption of the process through disease and other causes.

Dr. Henry Head, whose studies on these matters are well known, tells us that "speech and the use of language in its widest form require the perfect performance and interaction of a series of processes of great complexity The more abstract the symbol, the greater difficulty does it present"....

When we communicate with each other in our present life, one mind acts as transmitter and another as receiver, and there is constant interplay between them, varying in a remarkable degree according to the intelligence of the participants. If this is very unequal, the net result of their conversation may be almost negligible, in spite of the fact that both are using a mechanism which is familiar to them.

When the transmitter and receiver are

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mentally more equally matched, the results are proportionately more fruitful.

If there is highly specialized knowledge of a different kind on either side, the ideas of each may be almost unintelligible to the other, though the intelligence of both may be of a very high order.

If the transmission of ideas has to be made through a third person, this last factor will modify considerably the matter transmitted, as he must perforce interpret what is given to own make-up. Highly specialized knowledge cannot be apprehended by the untrained mind, and in such a case the third person fails to pass on to the receiver in any satisfactory degree the content of what had been, perhaps, most ably given by the transmitter.

If this situation be transferred to the case in which the transmitter is a discarnate personality, the receiver his relative on earth, and the third person the medium who delivers the message, the parallel is clear; it has also to be remembered that all three are making use of a process which is comparatively unknown, although it is being studied by

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many experts, and Professor Hyslop has contributed a detailed account of it as it appeared to him.

My own experience bears out the truth of these remarks, for I can seldom transmit successfully more than a mere fragment of a foreign language unknown to me; the same applies to mathematical material, for example, owing to my unfamiliarity with the subject.

"The world of thought," says Mr. Arthur Lynch, in his "Principles of Psychology", "is made up of direct experience and the peculiar reproduction or recall of these that we call memory." This implies ramifications of associated ideas, using this term in the psychological sense.

It has been said that "there is a tendency' for ideas to be associated together in our minds in such a way that the excitation of one will produce another".

In each individual, these associations are different, on account of the diversity of experience; and this fact takes a prominent place in the consideration of the process of mediumship.

Those who have read anything of psycho-

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analysis know how important a part is played by association in memory, and have glanced at the lists of test words which are used to discover the group of ideas associated with each in the mind of the individual patient.

Mr. Whately Smith urges all students of Psychical Research to take more note of this important factor of association, and Mr. Lynch, from whom I have quoted above, points out that the will cannot always influence the order of the ideas that arise in consciousness; any reader can test the truth of this for himself.

Dr. Emile Coue teaches patients to change the trend of their thought when necessary, rather by the training of the imagination than by the exercise of the will.

The medium has to prevent, so far as he can, his own associated ideas from hampering the transmission of the communicator's thought.

Two factors enter largely into the success or otherwise of a given communication, i.e., whether the subject has been of temporary or permanent interest to the communicator, and whether in his estimation the matter is a weighty or trivial one.

It is reasonable to expect that the weighty

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matter, and the one of permanent interest, will more readily be given, but it is often found that the degree of emotion attached to the remembrance of the subject is the deciding factor in its transmission or suppression. A certain degree of emotion appears to facilitate transmission, whilst an overpowering emotion may inhibit it partially or entirely.

In some cases, it is probable that the memory of incidents in the mortal life of a man may be overlaid by after-death experiences of so vivid a character that the former tend to fade away, or to become less and less sharp in outline. Even where all detail has faded from the memory, there sometimes remains a vivid sense of the general atmosphere of a situation; in the same way, many people can remember the general atmosphere of a book read with interest, although details have vanished from the mind.

The tricks played by memory with regard to names and special words are of great interest, whether in connection with the normal or abnormal processes of the mind, in health or when affected by disease.

One may be unable to recall a name, but

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may give quite correctly such information about it as that it is of medium length, giving the number of letters. It begins, perhaps, with M., and the last letter may also be given; these are more likely to be remembered on account of their prominent position. One can tell whether the name is a common one or otherwise, and one may be able to give various other names which are asserted to be like it; these are found to contain some elements of the name that is wanted, such as "Toms" for "Tomkins", or "Baker" for "Barber".

One may hear a name or special word clairaudiently, but not with sufficient clearness to give it correctly. The sentence "Yaccas I hate" was given in a communication, and was intended for "Slackers I hate". In the same way, "Old S. Hotel" should have been "Old Ship Hotel".

When trying to describe an object dimly seen by clairvoyance, a very common method is to reject many characteristics which are inapplicable, instead of making a positive assertion. Professor Broad, of Cambridge, speaks of this as a common feature in ordinary memory processes, and calls it a "negative

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memory situation"; it is accompanied by a peculiar feeling of "this does not fit the subject".

I myself have constantly arrived at a more or less accurate description of an object by this method, of which I will give an illustration ... "I don't think it is on the ground floor, but it is not very high up. It is not a sunless room ... I think one could easily look out on the garden from the window" . . . Then a clearer idea emerged, and I said: "It is on the first floor. It looks South."

I recently described a young man, who proved to be a chauffeur dressed in grey uniform, as one "wearing something like a khaki uniform, but not the brown shade of khaki, rather the greener shade". Yet even that did not seem entirely applicable, though I could get no nearer to it. What prejudiced my mind was the erroneous idea that this young man had been killed in the War, and as he was seen in uniform, my mind refused to imagine it anything but khaki.

One prominent limitation in these communications is the tendency towards circumlocution which seems almost inevitable in the

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transmission of messages. Sir Oliver Lodge has noted that with all sensitives these circumlocutions occur. Mr. F. W. Myers was of opinion that in some degree these could be minimized, and I certainly think that this may be done by making the conditions as satisfactory as possible.

These indirect methods of description occur frequently where names are concerned, or when a test question is presented for solution; still more unfortunately, they intrude themselves at the very moment when the crucial part of a commutation has been reached, resulting in the most valuable and essential part being omitted, or giving a distorted view of the whole message.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in an article on "Brain and Speech", in the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, of May, 1924, deals very clearly with these questions of circumlocution.

He states there that many people have thought that the difficulty about names, and the tendency to " hedge" when anything definite has to be uttered, as, for instance, in reply to a sudden question, is a sign not of mental confusion in sensitives, but of fishing and fraud.

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"I believe," he continues, "that in most cases that is a great mistake, and that we should accept the fact that there is a difficulty, and try to realize wherein the difficulty consists." He reminds his readers that fatigue induces in normal people something of the same character; and he adds that it seems to him very important that it should now have been discovered that lesions of the brain interfere only with the mechanism, and do not interfere with the general intelligence.

These difficulties, says Sir Oliver, are not due to mental confusion at all, but to a lack of adequate control of the speech centres, so that there is a block at some junction on the way to the speech centres, an obstruction which has to be got round by some indirect path.

Dr. Head reports some interesting cases of brain-injury causing the same circumlocutionary method to be used in describing a thing seen. One patient wished to describe the colour known as orange; he said that he recognized the colour as familiar, but the term *orange* did not come to him. He compromised by calling it " light brown", although aware that that was not quite the right colour.

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"When you said *orange*," he explained, "I was quite certain that it *was* orange."

Another patient could not describe an article which was black, but helped himself out of the difficulty by saying that it was "what we do for the dead".

Some patients who were asked to draw familiar objects left out their most essential characteristics, although perfectly aware that something important was left out. One such patient, familiar with the sight of elephants in India, drew a picture of one without tusks or trunk!

In my own transmission of psychic messages, hindrances of the same kind occur, of which I will give two instances.

A certain Lieut. Murray Gascoigne, killed in the War, in communicating with his mother, conveyed the idea . . . "You are still doing" . . . then followed a block . . . then was conveyed to my mind the idea of the son laughing at his mother doing some very familiar thing, sitting down . . . doing something with her hands ... a practical job, some occupation . . . something on her knee that she would bend over, ,,

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His mother's comment upon this was . . . "I was sitting mending stockings, and thinking of how Murray used to laugh at my mending stockings. He said I always seemed to be mending stockings, and, when away, he always thought of me as mending stockings!"

It does indeed seem strange that he should not have said, at the very outset, "You are darning stockings," but this method was evidently impossible here, and the indirect one was employed instead.

A rather more complex case is the following:

A lady communicating after death with a friend endeavoured to terminate the message with the words, "Your faithful friend, S.G.", because she had been accustomed to do so in writing to that particular friend during her life.

It was approximately accomplished in this way. . . . "A friend, a real friend . . . about three words . . . ending in S or ES . . . PH . . . AE or A." . . .

The friend who commented on the message recognized this attempt, summing up the fragments read phonetically as a distinct indication of "Your faithful friend, S.G.".

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In both the cases quoted, the communicators were entire strangers to myself.

Another characteristic of communication, which is possibly akin to the indirect method of which mention has just been made, is the way in which an important subject is approached then quickly dropped, and some trifling detail dwelt upon. The important subject is again taken up, and again as quickly left. This dovetailing-in of trivialities with really weighty matter is of very common occurrence, and is reminiscent of the very annoying experience of overhearing fragments of irrelevant conversation whilst trying to discuss a really vital matter over the telephone.

Experience inclines me to think that both this feature and that of the circumlocutions are due not altogether to blocks or obstructions in the mechanism used, but partially also to psychic fatigue, which plays an important part in the whole process. The sensitive who experiences this peculiar form of fatigue knows better than most people how greatly his work is affected thereby.

Parallels to this experience are familiar in our ordinary life, where a great variety is

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observable in the power of sustained effort during an important conversation.

If the element of emotion be an additional factor, the strain on sustained effort may be greatly increased, and a trivial intrusion may be welcomed with a sense of real relief.

One cause of psychic fatigue is the need for reassembling, to some extent, the associations which form the natural background for the idea which the communicator is trying to transmit. Every idea has its coterie of associations, without which it does not present itself to the mind, and cannot therefore be transmitted to another mind.

Under these circumstances, the sensitive is liable, during the indispensable process of gathering together the associations of an idea, to use up so much psychic force that he has little left when the idea itself is ultimately presented, and cannot register the latter in any satisfactory degree. In the case of communicator whose mind works slowly, the process referred to is long drawn out, and the difficulty still further increased.

In normal mental mediumship, the introduction of a question, whether directly
or

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indirectly—for many people send written questions to be asked at the sitting—necessitates the recall of the medium's conscious mind to activity, and the process of partial dissociation which took place at the outset must be repeated before the answers can be given,

There is considerable risk, under these circumstances, that the medium's conscious mind will involuntarily colour the answers to such questions, because he cannot estimate how much time to allow for the conscious mind to sink again into abeyance. Questions, moreover, tend to stimulate mental activity rather than to induce the quietude in which subconscious activities may energize.

May it be that this consideration enters largely into the reasons for the frequent failure of test-questions, which is such a stumbling-block to almost every inquirer?

A very baffling limitation to accurate transmission of messages is the intrusion of pathic thought from the minds of those on earth. If Mr. Arthur Hill is right in his speculation that we are “all united on subliminal levels”, this difficulty is to be expected.

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although the results are none the less disconcerting, both to the relatives who earnestly desire to come into touch with one who has passed away, and to the sensitive who wishes to transmit the message committed to him free from accretions from other quarters.

These intruding fragments of telepathic thought are often harmoniously incorporated into the communication, and can only be detected by the verifier of the message. Even then it is rarely, indeed, that the source of the intrusion can be traced; one can only relegate it to the realm of untraced inaccuracies.

In the following cases, however, the source was clearly revealed.

Into one clairvoyant scene there came a picture of a large bed of red geraniums. This was definitely traced by the person who had asked for the communication, and his explanation was that *he* had been looking out on to such a bed of geraniums when he wrote to ask for the sitting.

This pointed clearly to contact with *his* mind, although all the rest of the communication appeared to originate from another mind—that of a discarnate person.

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In another case, a curious incense-burner was seen and described, and in this case the verifier of the message, writing from America to the friend who records the sittings for me, said: "As a probably coincidental feature, at the time of writing to Miss Bazett I was contemplating sending a three-legged Japanese incense-burner to a young woman on the occasion of her wedding. 'Thoughts being things', I may have impressed such a picture on my letter, and it may have travelled across the bounding main and down into Surrey, but I cannot say I think so."

The writer evidently did not make sufficient allowance for the vagaries of telepathy, or for the psychometrical possibilities which might result from my having handled his letter.

These involuntary telepathic incursions are sometimes to be found in, for instance, a psychic message from a husband to his wife on earth, in which many points referred to are applicable not to himself but to his wife, though the latter fact does not emerge until the message is verified by her.

It has to be remembered that, in mediumship, clairvoyance figures very largely; where a

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definite word breaks down, and the idea is capable of being pictorialized, this method is often adopted. It has its advantages, both for the communicator and for the medium, in that it is simpler and clearer; but some pictures need only simple description, whilst others call for interpretation as well. It is here that I grave difficulties may creep in.

Not only do the clairvoyant pictures shown by the communicator need interpretation, but his facial expression and gestures need to be understood aright, if his character is to be at all adequately described.

One's power of character-drawing is necessarily limited by one's own experience of people, the various types that one has met. There have been cases in which both gesture and expression played an important part, and I have given a faulty interpretation, sometimes due to lack of experience, and sometimes to the fact that those particular expressions or gestures could bear more than one explanation.

The process of interpreting the mind of a stranger under the conditions imposed by mediumship is a difficult and delicate one; and the fact that the communication is not

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dictated, but received by mental impression, and then translated into the words and phrases which come most readily to the medium's own mind, causes the process of transmission to be so involved that the communication finally received inevitably bears traces of the influence of another mind upon it.

In spite of the difficulties enumerated above, and others of which lack of space forbids mention here, it is quite possible to present a picture which is a clear indication of the one whom the medium has attempted to portray.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEDIUM IN RELATION TO

THE SITTER

THERE is in the public mind a marked distaste for mediumship which is in any way specialized, and the "professional medium" is the victim of an amazing amount of ignorant prejudice on the part of people who have no knowledge whatever of his work or his motives. A little consideration is necessary in order to realize why a medium *becomes* "professional". I am speaking here of the genuine medium, of whom I have met a good many.

In general, they have manifested their gifts early in life, and have used them unsparingly amongst those with whom they worked, until it was gradually borne in upon them that these gifts might be of more use if they could be exercised under conditions of greater quietness, leisure, and freedom from the exacting claims of earning a living by some particular business. It is essential for them to earn an

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income, and they quite naturally ask a fee for time and effort placed at the disposal of those who claim their help.

They were faced with the alternative of giving up either their business, or the exercise of their psychic gift, which at present is a very rare one, whereas a capacity for business life is not uncommon.

It is only necessary to glance over the history of mediumship during the last half-century, to realize under what outstandingly difficult conditions these people have worked.

Mediums are proverbially hypersensitive to praise or blame, and most of them have had a steady bombardment of opposition directed at them, both by their families and by the general public. Such treatment of sensitives is, perhaps, hardly calculated to provide conditions favourable for the development of mediumship on any worthy level.

The harm that has been wrought is apparent in the following ways amongst others.

Mediums have been in danger of becoming what public opinion has often considered them to be, because of the now recognized psychological principle which determines that a man

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is liable to become what he is expected to become. It is realized in these days that rough treatment is detrimental in its effect, even upon the lout and the bully, driving him into paths of crime.

In the case of a person of more sensitive temperament, hard treatment may turn him into the devious ways of deception and fraud. His work, also, must be greatly impaired in consequence of such treatment, owing to its being of the nature of a delicate mental process; if it were mechanical handwork, it might, perhaps, be carried on under such treatment without damage.

The position of the professional medium has been brought about mainly by economic pressure; those who possessed similar gifts and were financially independent have shown marked reluctance in letting their psychic endowments become known. There have been some few exceptions, but in the main, the student and researcher has had to depend for his material for study upon the work of the professional medium.

One wonders what alternative to paid mediumship would be suggested by those who

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condemn it. Would an endowment system meet the difficulty, by removing the necessity for sensitives to depend on fees for their livelihood? This would entail inquiry into the credentials and *bona fides* of mediums, which would do much to ensure the safeguarding of the genuine from the fraudulent. Such a system might also enable the medium to refuse sittings to undesirable and unscrupulous persons, whom he must accept at present on account of financial necessity. For the same reason, he is often obliged to give more frequent sittings than is advisable for his health and the standard of his work.

There is an increasing demand for the help that can be given by such persons, who are few, indeed, compared with the number of those who have need of them.

In my own experience, on three special occasions, I have received invaluable help from persons so endowed. I am not here referring to comfort in sorrow, but to definite practical help which has greatly affected my life, and could have come to me in no other way.

One knows of cases in which a person in

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great sorrow has visited a medium whose professionalism has blunted his finer susceptibilities, and who betrays a type of mind the fibre of which displays a certain coarseness of texture. Where such a person finds his way into professional mediumship, these qualities must of necessity be painfully noticeable.

Even the clerical and medical professions have had occasional experience of such persons in their ranks.

With them, familiarity with their subject breeds a certain contempt as surely as in a higher type of mind it increases respect and reverence.

The shock of meeting a hardened familiarity at a time when death has cast its shadow over one's life is not easily to be recovered or forgotten.

One is reminded of the jovial grave-digger described by Anatole France, whose boast it was that he knew the habits of the dead; death had no terrors for him, he never gave it a thought!

Whilst burying the body, such a man gives no thought to the soul which has left it. He is concerned with the disposal of the body,

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whilst the soul has already passed beyond.

In contrast to this, one calls to mind such an attitude towards death as that expressed by a girl of twenty-six, who died in 1892. Conscious that her last day on earth had come, and that she would pass out in the early morning, she dictated the following lines:—

**"I shall go out when the light comes in:
There lie my cast-off form and face.
I shall pass Dawn on her way to earth
As I seek a path through space."**

A boy of eighteen spoke of death in the following terms:—

**"Approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."**

When an interview is sought with a medium for the first time, in the hope of communicating with someone recently passed over, the attitude of mind should be one of intelligent understanding, so far as possible, of what "the great adventure" of death may have meant for the one who has died.

There are those whose sole idea in seeking

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communication is to lament their utter loneliness, to pour out the perplexities which beset their path, and to implore the advice and help of the loved one.

Such people would, in the same spirit, visit a relative in hospital, still in a state of great weakness after a severe operation, and bemoan their loneliness, recounting also the difficulties which have arisen during his absence.

In neither case is there sufficient imagination to realize what has been the experience of the one who has suffered death or pain.

In my own experience—which I believe to have been especially fortunate in this respect—I have only rarely met this selfish lack of imagination. Indeed, I have been amazed at the extraordinary unselfishness of the majority of the bereaved.

If the imagination could expand to the conception of death as a process of "gathering together" in preparation for departure to a habitation more suited for the growing personality, there would be less dismay in face of the distressing signs of the breakdown of the physical body. These have been wonderfully described in the last chapter of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

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There is also a striking passage in Mr. Hutchinson's book, "If Winter Comes", which reads thus:—

"Profound and awful mystery. Within that form was in process a most dreadful activity. The spirit was preparing to vacate the habitation it had so long occupied. It gave no sign. The better to hide its preparations, it had drawn that mask about the face. Seventy years it had sojourned; now it was bound away. Seventy years it had been known to passers-by through the door and windows of its habitation; now, deeply retired within the inner chambers, it set its house in order to be gone. Profound and awful mystery. Dreadful and momentous activity. From the windows turning off the lights; from the engine of her powers cutting off its forces; drawing the furnaces; dissevering the contacts. A lifetime within this home; now passenger into an eternity."

The onlooker sees only these outward signs, and knows little of the inner adjustments which are being made; some of these changes are partially visible to the clairvoyant, especially at the moment of the final passing-out.

Some aspects of this subject are dealt with in a pamphlet called "Our World Invisible", written by a clergyman, Guy D. Cooper.

If the experience of "rising on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things" is a law of our evolution, as hinted by St. Paul

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in the words "I die daily", it may be that death itself is, as some have thought, "only a recurring incident in an endless life".

If there exists some common background of thought between the two participants in a sitting, they may be able to create an atmosphere in which the departed can make himself known.

He is sometimes called into mental conditions so markedly "of the earth, earthy", that one questions the right to call him there at all. If he be a character of a high order, it is real pain to him to respond to such a call; if, on the other hand, he be of inferior clay, the contact of "earth to earth" again is only too easy, but nevertheless harmful.

Little enough is known of the life to come by those who remain behind "clay-shuttered doors"; but at least it is conceived of as a life of advancement; and we should sin against this law of progress if we failed to maintain the highest level of thought on these subjects of which we are capable, especially when seeking communication with the dead. One has often heard it questioned ... Is it right to call back the dead? In my opinion,

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there is only one way in which they can be called back in any blameworthy sense, as I have indicated above.

We have our scruples as to retarding their progress where the next life is concerned, though this is frequently done, and without compunction, in the intimacy of everyday life on earth.

I suppose that one of the most vital needs of the bereaved person who seeks the help of a medium is to gain indisputable proof of the identity and survival of the one whose loss he mourns. The question of evidence is uppermost in his mind, and rightly so; but there cannot be any general standard of evidence, because what would be convincing to one mind would be worthless as proof to another. This applies even in the case of those most able to appraise evidence at its real worth,

One type of mind demands that knowledge of the future be shown in order that he may believe; another, knowledge of the past; yet another asks for intricate tests, such as the sensing of the contents of sealed packets or buried treasure.

Almost all wish to ask definite questions,

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of which the answers entail the use of names and dates; they rather naturally seek to impose conditions of communication which would be applicable to our ordinary life here, as that is within their own experience.

From what I have said in a former chapter, I think it will be seen that spirit-communication is *not* on the lines of communication as we know it here; yet we are not in a position to say exactly wherein the difference lies.

It may be that in insisting, even to the point of sorrowful exasperation, upon conditions that are known to us, we are retarding the discovery of others which may prevail in the world which we are endeavouring to penetrate.

The man who places all his faith on a knowledge of the future or the past being shown, needs to remember that a clairvoyant has power within himself to see both of these in some degree, quite apart from any touch with a discarnate mind, although the discarnate person may also be able to disclose past or future. How shall one determine who is exercising this power at that particular moment? The same principle is at work in

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the case of intricate experiments such as book-tests, or the sensing of the contents of sealed packets, etc. Personally, I feel that all types of evidence should be collected and

correlated with the utmost care, but that it would seldom be safe to trust the weight of the whole structure of one's conviction to the support of one type of evidence alone.

If we have made an attempt of this kind, only to watch our carefully built-up conviction fall to pieces around us, let us not despair, but show what we can of the marvellous attitude of mind of the scientist, who will carry out innumerable experiments, watching each fail in turn, and then, quite unmoved and uncomplaining, proceed with a new set of experiments which may reveal the working of some principle or law which he believes to exist.

We are inclined to connect the idea of continuity of memory with that of personality, because we cannot think of the beloved one without such a unified memory. I have tried to show, in an earlier chapter, that it is not necessarily the memory itself which is affected by physical death, but the mechanism used in communication which is unfamiliar.

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Dr. T. W. Mitchell suggests that there is a higher unity connected with this idea of personality, i.e., the unity of interest and purpose; such a unity, he suggests, is not primarily concerned with the structure of the mind, nor is it dependent on the mere continuity of elements.

A reminder such as this may be well to recall when tests involving memory have failed; the larger unity is in danger of being overlooked, because undue attention has been paid to experiments on a lesser scale.

The question was put to one in spirit-life: "Do you use our landscape?" "Yes," he answered, "or rather, you use ours!" And the idea was conveyed of earth-worms under a lawn making inquiry of the owners of the whole garden: "Do you use *our* lawn?"

Miss Maude Royden has lately put forward the idea that at least in middle-life people should realize that death is no longer the distant impossibility which it appeared to be in youth, but an experience which each is bound to meet, and should meet, with a mind in some sense prepared.

One has rarely come across such a point of

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view, yet a little consideration helps one to realize that middle-life is a time when one should with advantage be able to look forward as well as backward. The fact that many friends and relations have by this time preceded us into the new life should

stimulate a desire to know something of what is to be our own experience when we follow them. If we could take Miss Royden's advice, we should not be so completely at the mercy of personal loss when it comes to us at close quarters.

We are not then in a fit state to bring our judgment neither to bear on the great problems of survival and of the life beyond, nor to weigh such evidence as may be given to us through psychic channels.

For those who desire to make themselves acquainted with the results of the careful research and inquiry of many years past, there exist societies and publications founded for this very purpose; many have excellent libraries in connection with them, where all the most reliable literature on the subject may be found.

Much literature of a very different calibre, though on the same questions, is also accessible

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to the public; and although we may deplore the fact of its existence, we have to acknowledge that at least it has arrested popular attention in a remarkable degree.

My own experience, although limited, has constantly shown that in cases where some thought and study has been given to this really vital question, a far more enlightened judgement asserts itself when such persons are , actually met by the challenge of death. They are less likely to be either unduly credulous, or too persistently sceptical, as to survival and spirit-communication.

This matter has been more particularly brought home to me, because the nature of my work is such that I am forced to depend almost entirely on the written verification of scripts by distant correspondents. Their task is no easy one, and many have taken considerable trouble to verify the scripts point by point, and to make inquiries with regard to matters outside their knowledge. Others, again, for various reasons have not found it possible to make more than a few comments; in these cases, the value of the scripts to me personally almost negligible, as my great object in

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carrying on this work is to receive only what is verified and verifiable.

Those who have no previous knowledge of the subject are likely to be disappointed if the kind of communication which they expected, and for which they definitely asked—test-questions, etc.—is not forthcoming. They cannot then easily turn their attention to the careful consideration of what has actually been given, owing to the strength of their preconceived ideas. Where it has been possible to put these

aside, and to make an unbiased criticism of the script as it stands, some evidential points have emerged which have proved to be all the more convincing on account of their unexpectedness and spontaneity.

CHAPTER V

THE MEDIUM IN RELATION TO

THE COMMUNICATOR

A MODERN writer, whose name I cannot recall, has indicated in what spirit a man may best approach his own past.

“In order to draw from the past what is precious within it,” he writes, “and most of our wealth is there—we must go to it at an hour when we are strongest, most conscious of mastery, enter its domain, and there make choice of what we require, discarding the rest, and laying our command upon it not to cross our threshold without our order.”

In the case of a departed person whose whole interest was bound up with material life, it would be true to say of his earthly past that most of his wealth was there.

On the other hand, there are those who have looked upon material life as symbolic of something greater, and have thereby “laid up

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for themselves treasure in Heaven” in a more real and literal sense than is, perhaps, generally understood. This is well brought out in

“To-morrow”, a delightful little fragment in a book called “The Golden Windows”, by Laura Richards; and Henry van Dyke has treated the same subject in his little book “The Mansion”.

The idea of mastery over our past is one of vital importance, because the lack of this control is so often shown, both in our normal life here, and also after death.

It is too common a practice to return in thought to that which is gone in a mood tinged with vague sentimentality, a morbidity of emotion whose results are unprofitable and weak. “The facts of experience become as lanterns hung up in abandoned streets,” as Maeterlinck more poetically expresses it.

Cases have come under my notice in which the communicators were quite unfit to contemplate their past. The troubled circumstances through which they had recently

passed, the handicap of a difficult temperament, or both, made it especially undesirable that they should have touch with their former life and

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all its associations again, until some healing and readjustment had taken place.

I am thinking here of a few cases of morbid emotion, insanity, and suicide with whom I have dealt. It became evident during one sitting that the communicator showed symptoms of mental derangement, and I decided to proceed no further. If I had known beforehand of his condition, I should have advised delay before seeking communication; but my practice of asking only for the name and date of death made me enter on the experiment in ignorance.

The same in lesser degree has been my experience in seeking too soon after death communication from some of those killed in the War, who could only reiterate impressionally the terrible experiences they had passed through. In such cases, sympathetic imagination would suggest that the healing and readjustment of which they stood in need would for the present be assisted rather by the help of quiet prayer, and the right kind of thought directed towards them, than by actual communication.

I should like to make it clear that the above refers only to extreme cases, in which the

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unwisdom of communicating is perfectly obvious. Other cases occur to me, in which I question the advisability of communication until after the lapse of some considerable time.

There are those who during their earth-life have made quite unwarrantable demands upon others, taking from them time, money, strength and sympathy, and giving nothing in return. Such persons must, sooner or later, learn the working of a higher law, and this learning may be delayed by continuing a contact which has been selfishly misused.

There are others who cannot "draw from the past what is precious within it", for they were always at the mercy of its circumstances.

" They wander aimlessly, till Law and Pain Catch them among their iron wheels, and break."

Communications from such persons bear evident signs of lives which drifted without controlled direction.

I have been in psychic contact with a considerable number of children after their death; they appear almost invariably unaware of any break or sense of separation caused by this experience. Perhaps it is we on earth who

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create and emphasize the idea of such a gulf, from the trend of our accustomed thought on these matters. Children are, as a rule, more able to accept a change of conditions without question or analysis than those in adult life, though some of these also exhibit a childlike spirit in this respect. Such individuals appear to be so full of the absorbing interest of life itself, that the elements of which it is composed, including even death itself, are blended for them into one-ness, as individual colours are lost sight of in white light.

Those who possess this outlook usually make little, in communicating, of their physical death, which not unnaturally assumes large proportions in the minds of survivors; mention of it is frequently entirely omitted, or, if referred to, it is not stressed.

I remember reading somewhere of a friend visiting a great scholar on his deathbed; he was so near the end, that all his soul seemed to shine out through his large luminous eyes. His great concern seemed to be that he was passing out of this life with a lamentable ignorance of mathematics, and he requested eagerly that some book on the subject might

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be brought to him, that his remaining hours might be given to its study.

Death is but the key in the hand of the Lord of Life, used by him to admit a soul into fuller light when the time for this has come.

Some, impatient for the hour, have forced another entrance-way with a key of their own forging, only to discover, to their dismay, that it admitted them not to fuller light, but into a region of outer darkness.

I recall one communicator who looked back into his past with a mastery very striking in one so young. I sensed that he had gone through some very trying experiences latterly, but he would not speak of these either to me, or through me to his relations. His principle was to press forward instead of lingering in the past, with his attention determinedly fixed upon what life should open up for himself and others, rather than upon what had closed behind them. His simple metaphor was of a train, regarded rather as approaching its destination than as having left its starting-point.

By far the larger proportion of those with whom I have attempted to make a mental contact have conveyed the impression of finding

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life beyond fuller, freer, happier, more favourable for development, than on earth. I have usually gained this idea from them by catching some sense of the atmosphere which seemed to surround them.

Those to whom group-life of some kind is most familiar and congenial appear to enjoy this in a deeper and fuller way in the after-life. When in touch with them, a glimpse is gained of this fellowship, and also, in some cases, an indication of the special activities of such groups, and of the higher service which is theirs.

Those who apprehend most of the marvellous opportunities for expansion to fuller life are most conscious of their inability to convey this in any worthy degree. They give the impression of having entered more fully into possession of the kingdom of their own personality, and thereby "into a union with something vaster, the ground of all personalities".

On this plane, we have struggled to understand the theory and practice of right and wrong; our moral and social discipline has been based upon commands—"Thou shalt"—"Thou shalt not"—and we have followed an

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external rule, although our eyes may have seen an inner truth. Living under authority for the guidance of life was the only safe path for us. The spirits of those who have left this material life appear to live nearer to essential realities, finding themselves faced by the necessity of living by an internal law rather than by that which is external.

On the threshold of a new life, this principle will bring to some men a sense of joy and freedom, a power to expand, and to develop their own initiative; to others, it must be a very painful experience to be removed from the old support of authority, to exercise perforce the power of self-direction, and to learn that a man must be a law unto himself before he can take his place in the working out of a more comprehensive law.

A very imperfect conception of the higher spiritual laws is likely to be shown to us by those who communicate after death, for any one soul will be able to give only what he himself is capable of perceiving, and perception of spiritual truth is but gradually gained.

We have been inclined in the past to distinguish sharply between what was thought to

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be sacred and that which was termed secular; but to-day this distinction is less defined. This idea has been especially connected with life on earth as contrasted with life beyond, the latter being thought of as exclusively religious. Some who have held this belief on earth have shown that it is still theirs, and this is brought out in their communications.

Many have passed over in the expectation of an immediate vision of Christ, and to some I believe that this experience has been given. One spiritually-minded woman impressed upon me her conviction that Christ had come to her during the period of rest that followed on her death; she had not actually seen Him, but had been conscious of His presence.

In some cases, it has been clearly indicated that worship still plays a vital part in the life, as was the case on earth; sacred festivals, too, have their due place, as of old. In other minds, worship expresses itself rather as the response of the whole being to the Goodness of God as it presents itself to their increasing apprehension.

The religious opinions of communicators are as numerous and varied as the communicators

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themselves, and their conceptions of God differ as each man's character differs from another.

The impartial observer who is on the watch for evidences of subconscious mental activity in the medium will naturally suggest that the religious opinions expressed through me are likely to coincide with the trend of my own thought on these matters; this is often true, and accords with our common experience in exchanging ideas with those around us. Where there is common ground between two minds, their points of likeness will more readily be expanded than those upon which they are less in sympathy.

An unseen stranger might be expected to utilize congenial lines of thought which he finds in the transmitter's own mind, as these are more likely to convey his ideas with freedom and accuracy.

It has to be borne in mind that the medium and communicator are unfamiliar to each other, and that the time at their disposal is a limited one, owing to the fact that

psychic force cannot be drawn upon for too long together, as I have tried to explain elsewhere .

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It cannot be easy to make mention of intimate matters through a third person who is not even an acquaintance; the reserve of an Englishman is proverbial, and it is with these that I have chiefly dealt.

In most of the cases, one attempt only at communication has been made. But on the other hand, in a few instances, communication has been, by special request, repeated at intervals covering several years, and the results of these have been very promising and useful, both as regards evidence, and the undoubted consolation that has been given.

I have found it desirable to systematize this work carefully, and should not like it to be imagined that I put myself indiscriminately and always at the service of discarnate personalities.

My practice has been to reserve an hour or two in the evening, several times in a week, for sittings.

Due preparation is made for these in every way that is possible, and in this matter I ask the co-operation of the relatives who have desired communication.

It seems reasonable to suppose that by their

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speaking mentally to the would-be communicator, and making known to him in this way the means by which he is being asked to communicate, the whole process should be facilitated when the time for the sitting has arrived.

On my own part, I speak mentally some time beforehand to my spirit-guide, asking him to trace the desired person, and mentioning the hour that I have kept free for him.

A special room in the garden is set apart for this work, as being quieter and more remote than the house, which stands in a noisy position on a main road.

I have given, in barest outline, the practical preparations which seem to be reasonable, and which experience has shown to be most helpful. There is other preparation of a mental and spiritual kind which will occur to the minds of all, and is best made by each individual in the way which is specially his own.

I have referred to my spirit-guide, who made himself known to me through automatic writing, and described himself to me in the early days of this work as "the keeper of the door". He purports to be an entity who is

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willing to co-operate with me in this work by tracing individual persons in spirit-lite in a way which, so it seems, it would not be possible for me to do.

There are many who will suggest that psychology would reveal this hypothetical "spirit-guide" as a secondary manifestation within my own personality.

It may be so; the question of his individuality is of little moment compared with the importance of the necessary links being formed, which does apparently take place, although I do not profess to understand how it is brought about.

It is a common fallacy to believe that the exercise of mediumship in any of its forms must necessarily be depleting; I have, on the contrary, often experienced a sense of considerable refreshment during a sitting and afterwards. The peculiar feeling of quietness which is such a marked feature of a successful sitting is in itself a refreshment.

Silence has been defined as "concentrated power", and it is a silence of this kind that the mind can enjoy; a great activity moves therein; it is by no means a deadness wherein nothing stirs.

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The harmonious conditions in which silence plays a part can, apparently, make a possible setting for the contact of mind with mind, and the results cannot, I think, justly be classed as "purely trivial".

Even the references to trifles, which are given for identification, have their own considered place, and in this connection are certainly not to be despised.

I think I have made it clear, speaking from my own experience alone, that these trifles, useful as they are, form only a very small part in the total of communication.

When this reaches its worthiest level, it does service to the bereaved in two special ways amongst others.

Dame Edith Lyttelton has expressed this better than I can hope to do, and I quote again from "The Faculty of Communion". . . .

The twofold help concerns those in sorrow, who learn "not to vanquish or subdue grief, but to transmute it".

It also concerns their relation to those who are gone, in that a false idea concerning them is corrected.

"We step too easily," she writes, "into the

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mental habit of imagining that they and our love for them belong to the past and to the future only. But it is now, the present moment, which we can live through together, if we will; not, indeed, exactly as we did when both were together in the same stage of existence, but with absolute reality nevertheless."

CHAPTER VI

MEDIUMSHIP IN RELATION TO

ORDINARY LIFE

IN the "Pilgrim's Progress", Bunyan has familiarized us with the thought of man's passage through life being surrounded by influences for good and evil.

What he so *graphically* describes is a matter of actual perception, in some degree, to those who are endowed with the awareness that belongs to the psychic faculty. To them, it is a matter of common experience that such influences are an important factor in men's lives, invisible, but none the less potent.

Such a power is theirs, not merely in order that they may see evil walking the earth in visible form; their eyes are also open to discern "when angels walk with men".

Humanity is more prone to recognize evil in any form than good, and even civilized man has a fear of devils not far removed from that

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of primitive races, showing that he is still on the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder.

It would be a revelation to some if they knew what beneficent presences are sometimes visible to the seeing eye.

I have been told by one who was Sister of a ward in a large hospital, of the beautiful spirit-presences frequently to be seen there, especially near the beds of the dying.

On two occasions in my own life, I have seen wonderful shining figures which I can only describe as angelic. They were very radiant, clothed in some soft iridescent substance; and they brought an indescribable atmosphere of peace and blessing.

For our comfort, we may recall that such an influence may be felt in many places and buildings; the psychic who enters such a building perceives the fragrance

that "fills the house", though he may not know whose "box of ointment, very precious", was offered there.

If thought of all kinds can create an atmosphere in and around buildings, it may easily be imagined what the experience of a psychic might be on entering a house which has been the focus of unpleasant or evil thoughts.

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I myself have had experiences of this kind, one of which I will briefly describe.

There was a certain house which I visited from time to time, and was asked one day why I did not come more often. As I could not avoid answering the question, I replied that there was an influence in the house which I found it trying to encounter. I was then told that my hostess had herself been aware of some such influence about the house, and had sometimes been awakened at night in a state of alarm.

I suggested that this presence might be exorcised by prayer, and she agreed to pray for liberation from it.

Sometime later, I visited this house again, in the evening, and remarked to my friend that the unpleasant influence seemed to have left it. She said that she knew this to be so, but had waited to see if I should speak of it myself.

On my way back to where I was staying, I felt myself followed by an unseen being. The night was very dark, as it was War-time, and there were no lights, so I walked in the middle of the road; it was quite late, and there was no traffic astir.

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I had walked only a short distance, when a presence rushed upon me from behind, like Apollyon in "The Pilgrim's Progress". Both my shoulders were gripped, and looking back, I beheld a spirit-form so evil that I recoiled, and broke into a cold sweat. Recovering myself, I turned and faced it, commanding it to depart in the Name of the Trinity, making the sign of the Cross. It fell back some paces, as if it had been struck, and I walked on. Again, and yet again, it came upon me with renewed force, and each time I rebuked it in the same words, and with the same result.

The third time, I felt that its power had gone, and that it had turned away defeated. I have always thought it possible that it followed me from that house, venting its revenge upon me for having suggested its ejection by prayer.

It was a horrible experience, and one which brought home to me very forcibly the need for spiritual equipment against the forces of 'evil.

There are shadowy places in the minds of us all, which, possibly, by the law of attraction, may sometimes invite the presence of

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evil spirit-influences, or thoughts projected by them.

As an illustration of this projection of thought to a distance, I should like to mention a significant incident.

Two people known to me were suffering from a misunderstanding, caused, as I believe, by jealousy; they spoke to me of the matter, and I tried to help them both. One of them came to see me, and during our conversation I was suddenly aware of an angry presence in the room. I turned to see what it was, and saw clairvoyantly the red outlines of a form, vibrating vehemently with passion.

I recognized it as a thought-projection from the other person concerned, and met it quickly and silently with a mental appeal. . . . "Don't do this! It will harm you very much. Withdraw these feelings, take them quietly away, they are unworthy of you." The apparition disappeared immediately, as I had hoped, for I knew how sensitive was the personality to any such appeal. The friend who was talking to me was, I believe, unaware the intrusion, and I made no mention of it.

We all know how we react upon one another

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to a very great extent. A happy person will radiate happiness to those around him, and a morbid person will dull and cloud the mental atmosphere with his murky thought.

The sensitive, in the course of his ordinary life, has to meet people of all shades of thought, healthy and otherwise.

He may sit in a rail way-carriage, at close quarters with someone who all unconsciously may cause him considerable discomfort, or even pain. The psychic may be aware of a train of thought passing in the mind of the stranger, of so unpleasant a nature, that if questioned, the originator would in self-defence disclaim it. Other people in the carriage might be unconscious of the unpleasant thought-infection which was around them; one does not know what effect it might unconsciously produce upon them.

To the psychic, the innate quality of a man's character is often evident; the masks are worn in social life do not conceal it from him. we

In the next state, it would appear that we are known for what we really are; and the acute perception of the psychic is a perpetual

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challenge to those of us whose thoughts are not on a level to bear such clear-eyed scrutiny.

The psychic, owing to his unusual insight into character, is sometimes able to give a word of warning where it may prove useful. One may hand a letter to him without comment, and he may be at once aware of some outstanding feature in the writer's character or circumstances which, if known, gives a clue to the course which should be taken in regard to such a person. These impressions may, of course, be sometimes unreliable; but they have proved so often correct that such help in a difficulty is worth taking into consideration.

Opportune advice may sometimes be given in matters concerning health, as conditions of this kind can often be plainly seen; it will easily be understood, however, that complications might arise here, unless such impressions were combined with medical knowledge and training.

Not only is the psychic aware of what is taking place around him in a very special way, but he can, and does, often perceive distant occurrences, and the conditions surrounding

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persons far removed from, and unknown to, him.

I have myself received impressional intimations concerning persons at a distance with whom I had the barest acquaintance, to the effect that certain specified events would take place in their lives, unless suitable steps could be taken by them to prevent this; or, on the other hand, that events which seemed inevitable would not actually come to pass, if a serene attitude of thought were maintained in face of the impending crisis. So clear and defined have been some of these impressions, that I have felt justified in passing them on to those concerned, who have almost invariably thanked me for the warning sent, stating that it was astonishingly applicable to their own conditions at the time. Such impressions come spontaneously and unsought into one's everyday life, and are not the result of any special attempt at concentration.

In the same unsought and natural way, the psychic is conscious of strange "awarenesses" in his ordinary existence. He may be talking with strangers, and see suddenly a clairvoyant picture of one who is not present in the flesh,

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and yet is intimately bound up with the life of someone in the room. In some cases, this apparition may be connected with a person still living on earth; at other times, it is a discarnate being who is seen. In either case, some train of thought may be clearly perceptible on the part of the one thus seen, in connection with the object of his concentration.

The idea so well expressed by Miss H. A. Dallas, that we are *all* spirits, some incarnate, some discarnate. is constantly borne in upon the realization of a psychic

I remember a curious little incident which endorses this truth.

I was at tea in a friend's house on one occasion, and met a stranger there. Conversation turned on her impending departure for India, and she mentioned that she expected to sail in the following month. As she was speaking, I saw clairvoyantly the tall figure of a man standing at her side. He looked at her with a whimsical smile, and I caught his unspoken words: "I have not lived with you for the last thirty years without knowing you! You will never really decide to go!"

I ventured to describe this apparition to

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her, and she recognized him as her husband, who had quite recently died; she had not spoken of him before, and was not wearing mourning at the time.

At a Sunday Service recently in London, I watched a stranger come in with her little girl; she had considerable difficulty in finding a seat, as the building was very full.

As she moved along, there followed her the spirit-form of a tiny child, touching her skirt with one hand, eagerly anticipating recognition, It was no misty apparition, but a luminous, defined form, lifelike, and vigorous in its movements. Some impulse urged me to seek out the mother, and tell her of this, but she had already disappeared in the crowd.

It is difficult for those without psychic vision to realize how frequent and natural such appearances are.

The knowledge that the dead are often amongst us should ease"" the effort to bridge " the chasm between this life and another", of ,which Mrs. Lyttelton speaks.

"The effort," she writes, "seems too much for a human being and since the habit of living in the present with the dead has not

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been fostered, the past fades, and the future cannot be imagined."

It has been our custom to speak of our dead in the past or future tense alone; the psychic has shown us the continuity of life, and has restored to us again those whom we had delivered over to death in dumb submission, whilst the sword pierced our own souls also.

Sir William Osier, in his book on "Science and Immortality", quotes the following lines from Stephen Phillips:—

**"I tell you we are fooled by the eye, the ear;
These organs muffle us from that real world
That lies about us; we are duped by brightness.
The ear, the eye, doth make us deaf and blind;
Else should we be aware of all our dead
Who pass above us, through us, and beneath us."**

Dr. William Brown has reminded us that "Immortality is not something that we have to wait for at the end of this life, but something that we can achieve in varying degrees while still living this life."

We have been taught to think of the school of suffering as the one in which most of our higher lessons are learned.

A curious experience arrested my attention

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with regard to this matter, at a time when my thoughts were directed towards the general question of the healing of the sick, and in particular to a friend who had been an invalid for many years. Various means for her recovery had been employed, but without success, and she was at this time undergoing a new and drastic course of treatment, which it was hoped might at last yield good results.

I myself felt very confident; and in this frame of mind, I awoke early one morning, to behold a symbolic vision.

I saw the figure of the suffering Christ outlined against the white door of my room. He was bowed down, as if struggling under a heavy load, with a look of

inexpressible pain on His face. His arms appeared to be groping forward, as if to find support. The idea conveyed to me was . . . "Must humanity *always* advance through this way of suffering ? When will they learn another way?" It was as if He were being broken with the endless pain of the world, and with the long waiting for it to find a higher way.

It came to me that the way for this friend to learn must be still in the old school of

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suffering; but the vision arrested and haunted the mind, and challenged thought on the whole subject.

The suffering caused by bereavement during the European War was on a scale so vast, and the consolation which could be given to assuage it so inadequate, that one could not be altogether surprised if almost desperate means were used in attempting to break through the barriers of death, and to obtain proof of the continued existence of the thousands who had fallen.

Many who were unconsciously endowed with some psychic powers endeavoured for the first time to develop what they were assured might be latent within them, and in some cases quite remarkable phenomena occurred. On the other hand, many persons exhausted themselves by fruitless efforts to develop such powers, and the only relief obtained was a kind of stupor resulting from exhaustion and sorrow. Many such experiments were undertaken with very little knowledge of safe procedure along an unfamiliar path, and the results were such as to cause additional pain to minds already overburdened.

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Through those troubled years, and ever since, the consolation given through psychic means has been steadily growing in volume, so that, to-day, the facts to which psychic science bears witness are supported by a great body of adherents.

The power of the psychic to see into the future is a recognized fact, although to many people this faculty appears one of the most remarkable in his possession.

If some knowledge of the future is to be available, it follows that the element of chance, of the accidental, "the mere incoherence of things", must necessarily diminish, as indeed has been its tendency through the advancing course of civilization.

"The human species," says Professor Julian Huxley, "is evolving to free experience more and more from the accidental."

The psychic has surely a valuable contribution to give in this direction, enabling those with due balance and judgement to take j the future, so far as it can be seen, into their calculations.

The idea of seeing into the future, sometimes with remarkable clearness and accuracy,

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become to me, as to most sensitives, a familiar one, and the verification of predictions made by communicators is a very interesting feature of this particular work.

It has been shown that psychic power gives to the sensitive, in many cases, a remarkable understanding of other people, but it has been too commonly his own experience in the past to be met with suspicion and misunderstanding on the part of those around him. We cannot hope to understand another person by projecting, so to speak, our own methods of thinking upon him, and thus trying to understand him in terms of ourselves. The psychic cannot truly be interpreted in terms of others not so endowed. This is clearly brought out in a book by Mary Skrine, "Shepherd Easton's Daughter", which is a very interesting study of the life of a psychic who possessed marked ability for healing. The service which she would have rendered was constantly hindered by those who misunderstood and feared both her and her powers.

The psychic has it in his power to render certain kinds of service to humanity which can be given by himself alone; the greatest of

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these is, perhaps, his constant witness to the reality of the unseen world, and its interpenetration of our own. For him, in a special sense, the words of Francis Thompson are true:—

**" O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee.
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee !"**

May it be that to the mystic and the psychic is given the high privilege of leading into this world of reality those whose eyes are not yet able to behold it, but who would gladly walk therein by faith, until for them also shall 1 dawn the day of open vision?

THE END

"Man, symbol of eternity imprisoned into time! Know that it is not thy works, which are all nothing, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance."—**THOMAS CARLYLE.**

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