

# PROCEEDINGS

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PART XCVI

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A REPORT ON SOME COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED  
THROUGH MRS. BLANCHE COOPER.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE object of the present paper is to discuss a series of experiments and observations carried out during the years 1921-1922 with a direct voice medium, Mrs. Blanche Cooper, who practises at the British College of Psychic Science. The sittings, which began on September 1, 1921, were with occasional lapses held once a week until the following June. I will say at the outset that my studies of Mrs. Cooper were concerned entirely with mental phenomena and do not touch at all upon the physical aspects of the case. If one sets out to investigate mental phenomena one is perhaps justified in ignoring those physical concomitants which belong properly to the province of the expert physicist or the expert physiologist. I am not, therefore, interested in the question as to whether the voices heard at Mrs. Cooper's séances are truly independent or are produced by the exercise of her ordinary vocal apparatus. It does not matter from my point of view if Mrs. Cooper holds the trumpet to her mouth and speaks into it in the ordinary way, since I am not concerned at all with how the voice is produced but simply with what the voice says and with any characteristic intonations which it may possess. But whatever may be the physiological explanation of the voices it is

certain that they involve a degree of mental dissociation and present many of the usual stigmata of unconscious mental phenomena. The medium does not go into trance and in the intervals when the voice is not speaking she is apparently normal and able to converse with the sitters, and sometimes even able to repeat words which the voice has just said. There is, however, right through the sitting a certain degree of absent mindedness and the medium is sometimes slow to respond to questions addressed to her by the sitter. While the voice<sup>1</sup> is not speaking she keeps up a continuous humming noise with her lips, and this humming ceases when the voice comes into play. Throughout the period of my own experiments the medium seemed unable to sustain the voice for more than a minute or two at a time, and the information was given for the most part in rapid snatches, punctuated by periods of silence lasting from a minute up to a quarter of an hour.

Moreover, it appeared that the voice could only be produced while the musical box was playing, and only on one or two occasions were words spoken a second or two after the music had ceased. Objective lights were seen at every sitting, but these appeared in the silent intervals and were never simultaneous with the voices. These lights varied in appearance from dim amorphous patches to bright bluish discs about the size of a half crown. When one attempted to touch them, even without warning the medium, the lights invariably receded in the direction of the cabinet. In the light there often appeared the dark outlines of the upper half of the four fingers of a hand which may well have been the right hand of the medium which was free.

#### METHODS OF TRANSMISSION.

The mechanism by which ideas are transmitted through the mediumship of Mrs. Cooper seems to be somewhat different from that used by a trance personality like Feda in the séances of Mrs. Leonard. My own experience of

<sup>1</sup>I have no record of any occasion on which two or more voices appeared to speak at the same time.

Mrs. Leonard is limited, but judging from the few sittings I have had and from reading the long series of reports of Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall, it would appear that the method by which ideas are presented to Fedá is in the main<sup>1</sup> a pictographic one. Fedá sees pictures and from these pictures she has to try to build up a story that will be intelligible to the sitter. Now my experience with Mrs. Cooper rather strongly suggests that her unconscious mind and the co-conscious personalities which exist within it are concerned very little if at all with the receiving and interpretation of visual impressions. On the contrary the function of her automatism seems to be the transmission of auditory impressions.<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Cooper gives names and phrases which I am convinced could awaken in her subconscious mind nothing beyond the mere sound of the words themselves. At Sitting No. 31, for instance, the control Nada pronounced the name "Shagoian" quite clearly and almost perfectly. In giving this name Nada simply said "Something from your brother which you will understand." Asked what it meant she said she did not know. It was the name of a student of mine, Mr. Armenag Shagoian, whom I had been coaching in mathematics for several weeks previous to the sitting. This apparent direct transmission of word-sounds seems to extend not only to individual words like "Starbobs" [Sitting No. 6, p. 499], but sometimes to whole phrases, which give the impression that they have been heard and faithfully reproduced in some mysterious manner. Thus in Sitting No. 13 [p. 506] there is the phrase "grove gate" used to describe a certain gate near our old home at Stambridge. It was the expression invariably used by

<sup>1</sup> Fedá, of course, does on occasion get auditory impressions and even olfactory sensations, but I think most students will agree with me that her method is in the main a method of visual pictures. The expression "She's showing Fedá something" constantly occurs in the various reports of her utterances.

<sup>2</sup> The writer has since learned from a reliable source that on one occasion at which Mrs. Cooper's sitters were Dutch people some fragments of Dutch—a language with which Mrs. Cooper is quite unfamiliar—were communicated. This fact rather supports the theory of the transmission of audile verbal imagery.

the members of our family when they wished to refer to this particular gate, and probably by no one else in the neighbourhood except perhaps a few boys like Walter Valentine and Percy Paternoster who had learnt the phrase from us.

Had Fedá been aiming at a reference to this same gate she would probably have seen a field with a path leading from it to a wood and then perhaps have noticed that the wood consisted mostly of tiny trees with some bigger ones and that there was a gate near the bigger ones. Both methods doubtless have their own peculiar advantages. For while Mrs. Cooper's terse phrase "grove gate" has a definiteness that no general pictorial description could ever attain, Fedá, on the other hand, while taking longer to arrive at her destination, would perhaps have given many more collateral facts in the process of getting there.

The direct voice seldom speaks in complete sentences. Short condensed phrases are the rule and by this means a great deal of ground is covered in a short time. Questions asked by the sitter are seldom answered immediately in the case *when the sitter is holding the correct answer in his conscious mind.* In such cases<sup>1</sup> it was usually found that the idea had to pass back into the unconscious mind of the sitter before it could emerge from the automatism of the medium. The communicator, when asked for an answer, would usually reply, "I cannot give it now, but will try to give it later." Then at a later period of the sitting when the sitter had quite forgotten the matter in question the correct answer would be forthcoming. In cases when the correct answer was not known to the sitter a direct question would often result in immediate success; such instances are to be found on p. 542, Sitting No. 18, J. F.'s answers; Sitting No. 20 Item No. 17 [p. 563]; Sitting No. 21 Item No. 47 [p. 565]. In considering the output of the present series of sittings it must be borne in mind that we are dealing with the results obtained through a combination of two psychic personalities. The sitter is himself an automatic writer and is therefore—at least to some extent—subject to

<sup>1</sup>Cf. p. 496, l. 14.

dissociation, although he did not develop automatic writing until a year after the direct voice sittings were finished. It is, I think, now generally admitted that a degree of mental dissociation in the mind of the sitter is one of the determining factors in the production of supernormal information. That is to say, a sitter who is himself mediumistic will in general be more successful with mediums than another sitter will be who is quite undissociated. This fact of mental dissociation on the part of a sitter does not, however, seem to account for the variations of success which are encountered by the *same* sitter in experiments with *different* mediums. Personal sympathy between medium and sitter, though a most helpful factor, does not seem in itself always sufficient to ensure results. The present writer found for instance that while he "got on" very well indeed with a certain well-known clairvoyant, yet the output of supernormal knowledge was extremely meagre. One may suggest that success will depend at least to some extent on the fact of the medium and sitter possessing *the same predominant types of mental representation.* If the transmission of ideas and images from the mind of the subject to that of the medium plays any important part in the mental process, we should expect such similarity as I have mentioned to be a vital factor. The writer himself is a good "visual" and an indifferent "audile," but he possesses in addition an exceptional tendency to visualise words and to articulate them inaudibly. Thus, if someone suggests to him the idea of *a mountain,* he will see in his mind first a picture of a mountain and next he will usually see the word "mountain" spell itself out in white letters. Then, as often as not, he will find himself saying the word "mountain" inaudibly to himself. This predominance of verbal imagery in the mind of the sitter may possibly account for his success with a direct voice medium in comparison with the interesting though less striking results he obtained with mediums whose method is largely pictographic.

It is hoped in the near future to secure the co-operation of the large number of people who have had sittings.

with Mrs. Cooper in order to ascertain if any correlation exists between types of mental imagery in the sitter and success with the medium.

#### THE MEDIUM'S SUBJECT MATTER.

As is the case with most professional mediums the communications obtained through Mrs. Cooper are of psychological rather than of intrinsic interest. Her super-normal faculties exercise themselves almost entirely on certain trivial aspects of the lives of deceased personalities. In rare cases, however, the subject which the medium describes may be a living person whom the medium has mistaken for a dead person. In the important case of "*Gordon Davis*," it will appear that except for the mysterious prevision of the future house the same kind of facts are given about a living personality as are given about a personality that has once lived. In no case did the medium's trance-consciousness occupy itself with subjects of intellectual or artistic interest.

#### CHARACTERISTIC QUALITIES OF THE VOICES.

The voices produced at Mrs. Cooper's séances show variations in pitch and timbre to correspond with the different personalities which are supposed to be communicating. Thus, when a young boy communicates, the voice takes on a boyish intonation and alters somewhat in pitch, and similarly in the case of a young girl. Some fundamental quality of Mrs. Cooper's own normal voice is, I think, to be observed in all the voices. In the case of my deceased brother who was the most frequent communicator, I could not recognise the voice produced at the séance as the normal earthly voice I had known. The general pitch was perhaps the same, but the voice itself I could not identify. It is of interest, however, to note that in the case of my brother a "séance voice" was developed which preserved certain marked characteristics so that immediately this particular voice spoke I was able to recognise it as the voice intended for my brother.

Even in the case of a purely fictitious communicator like "John Ferguson" the voice conserved the same individual qualities from séance to séance. Only in the case of the living communicator "Gordon Davis" did the voice really remind me of the living person. I am unable to say whether the voices of "James Miles" and of "Benson"<sup>1</sup> resembled those of the real persons for the simple reason that I was never acquainted with them. There was certainly an asthmatic hoarseness to be noticed in the voice of the old man in the "Benson" case, and it transpired, in fact, that he had suffered before his death from a chest complaint. There has to be considered, however, the possibility of certain qualities such as the asthmatic hoarseness in the "Benson" case and the very precisely articulated utterance of "Gordon Davis" being introduced *for the express purpose of conveying dramatically certain facts about these particular personalities.* That is, we may suppose, that what was intended was not to give a faithful reproduction of the voice of "Gordon Davis" in all its almost inimitable qualities, but merely to convey in this way certain facts about the man—such as the fact that he had cultivated a very precise accent, etc. Here is another point to be noted. My brother during life spoke with a rather marked North Country accent. No attempt was ever made to reproduce this at the Cooper séances.<sup>2</sup>

#### NADA AND AFID.

There are two voices which manifest at all of Mrs. Cooper's séances. These call themselves "Nada" and "Afid," and purport to be Mrs. Cooper's guides and say that their function is to look after the medium and to help the other communicators to manifest themselves. The voice of "Nada" is a rapid girlish whisper; the voice of "Afid" is gruff and sepulchral, and was seldom heard until the very close of the séance, when he would

<sup>1</sup> The case of "Benson" is not discussed in the present paper.

<sup>2</sup> The north country accent (Yorkshire) was, however, noticed at a trance sitting with Mrs. Brittain on July 22, 1919, when my brother purported to communicate.

announce in nearly always the same formula that "power is going." The voice of Nada was heard frequently during the séance and often though not always spoke at the commencement before the other direct communicators. "Nada" like "Feda" sometimes spoke in asides to the direct communicators, giving them instructions not to forget certain details, etc. She seems aware of things which happen in the immediate environment of Mrs. Cooper, as when, for instance, she remarked that one of the medium's pet mice had died. On one occasion "Nada" opened the séance by saying, "what dreadful weather we are having."

Like many other secondary personalities both "Nada" and "Afid" are under certain delusions concerning their pasts and have come to believe certain stories about themselves which I do not think it necessary to repeat here. Of the two controls "Nada" seemed the more developed as an independent personality, and it is possible that she may be a sort of resuscitation of Mrs. Cooper's girlhood. "Afid," on the other hand, with the sole exception of one occasion on which he advised me on my health and offered to send a "spirit doctor" to see me, whom he called "Doctor Alder," remained silent during the séances, only coming in at the end with his invariable reminder that "power is going." Supernormal information was sometimes volunteered by "Nada," who professed to get it from the purporting communicator, but I found on the whole that information given by "Nada" was *slightly* less reliable than when it came direct from the communicator himself. [In the "Gordon Davis" case, "Nada" is as reliable as "G. D." himself.]

#### GENERAL ABSTRACT OF EXPERIMENTS.

*Section 1* of my paper is devoted to a series of sittings at which the sole communicator was a *deceased brother*. In addition to recording and analysing a large number of spontaneous communications I consider in this Section certain experiments whose object was the obtaining of facts that were unknown to the sitter.

*Section 2* is the study of what is perhaps the most

interesting of a number of *fictitious* communications. This case of "John Ferguson" is very interesting as showing the interplay between the minds of medium and sitter. The study of such purely imaginary communicators affords, we believe, a valuable method for observing the transference of ideas between sitter and psychic.

In *Section 3* we discuss the case of "*James Miles*," a fictitious communicator of an entirely different type. This case appears to emphasise the necessity of the existence of a physical link relating the sitter to the deceased personality, and argues the impossibility of obtaining in the absence of such a link information about a deceased personality which is not already present in the mind of the sitter.

*Section 4* deals with what is perhaps the most interesting case of the whole series. It is a case in which a person believed by the sitter to be dead, communicates spontaneously through the direct voice. He reproduces more or less accurately the tone of his voice, its accent and his characteristic mannerisms of speech. He describes incidents of his boyhood known to the sitter and speaks of one or two matters unknown to the sitter. Most interesting of all he gives an accurate description of the environment and interior arrangements of a house which he did not occupy until a year later. Going back into the past he is able to reproduce accurately the place of his last meeting with the sitter and the substance of the conversation. Further, he is dramatised as if he were a deceased personality, desiring to send messages of comfort to his wife and child. In the end we discover that he is still living. By means of a diary kept by him, we are able to discover accurately just what he was doing at the times of the first two sittings.

#### METHOD OF TAKING NOTES.

One difficulty presented itself at the outset of my experiments. This was the difficulty of taking accurate verbatim notes of what was said both by myself and by the voices at sittings which were held in total darkness,

while the right hand of the sitter was held by the left hand of the medium the whole time. In the case when a friend was introduced it was quite impossible to take any notes at all while the sitting was in progress since on these occasions neither of my hands was free. I soon found, however, that the difficulty was not insuperable. The voices seldom spoke more than a few phrases at a time, and there were considerable pauses during which by means of a hard pad balanced on my knee, and using my left hand, I was able to take what were practically verbatim notes. But even had I been entirely unable to take any notes while the sitting was in progress, the amount of matter which is given at a sitting is always so very small that, for a person who is fortunate enough to possess as good a memory as my own, exact memorisation would be no very difficult feat, especially if the sitter were keenly interested. In every case in which it was impossible to make exact notes during the sitting, memorised notes were written out in pencil before leaving the séance room. It was not until the third sitting that I made any attempt to take notes with my left hand, but after this sitting, unless a friend happened to be present, I invariably used this method. Before the war I had the misfortune to injure my right arm, and for a period of three or four months I cultivated ambidexterity, writing letters and even lecture notes with considerable facility. I found it, therefore, no very difficult feat to maintain a stiff pad on my knees while writing with my left hand. I found that the darkness itself presented no real difficulty whatever. I could write as legibly in the dark as in the light. Nothing in the way of rapid writing was needed as is the case with "Feda" talk.

#### THE COMMUNICATOR OF SECTION I.

The communicator of Section I purports to be the writer's deceased brother, and a few words about his life history and subsequent psychic history may not be out of place.

My youngest brother, Pte. Frank Soal, 6th Leicester Regiment, died in France at the age of nineteen, from wounds received in action on September 5, 1918. Of the nature of his wounds, or how he received them, we know little, save that he appears to have been wounded on September 1st, to have died four days later at a Casualty Clearing Station, and to have been buried in Bagneux British Cemetery.

Born at Little Stambridge, near Rochford, Essex, on March 9, 1899, the earlier part of his life up to his sixteenth year was associated almost entirely with the fields and trees of the Essex countryside. Until 1914 he lived at the old Rectory, Little Stambridge, two miles from the Railway Station at Rochford, but in the winter, 1914-5, the family moved from these purely rural surroundings to Prittlewell, which is five miles away and a suburb of Southend-on-Sea. In that same year, 1915, my brother was apprenticed to a large firm of electrical engineers. Of a strongly scientific and constructive bent of mind he soon developed the keenest interest in electrical work, and made excellent progress. He was essentially of a practical experimental type of mind, and not of the type that could appreciate abstract symbolism. Hence he was never able to make much progress in mathematics. In the last years of his life he developed in a remarkable way, showing unexpected interests and enthusiasms. At eighteen years of age, in March, 1917, he joined the Army, was a keen young soldier, and entered into his training with zest at Colchester, Sevenoaks, and Westport, Ireland. He was sent to France in April, 1918. A month later he was slightly gassed, sent to the base for a few weeks, returned to the Front and was killed in September. I missed him keenly. About a year before his death I had become interested in psychic research, but being in the Army I had no opportunities for sittings, until I was demobilised in 1919. In April of that year I became a member of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and it was at one of the public meetings of this body that I obtained my first personal experience of super-normal faculty. This occurred on May 20, 1919, at an L.S.A.

meeting when Mrs. Annie Brittain was giving clairvoyant impressions from the platform. I had never seen her before, and was sitting in the front row, when, towards the end of the meeting, she turned to me and said, "Do you know *Canuter*? or it might be *Canuder*?" She did not know if it were a place or a person. I replied, "I think it is a little village I know well." She said, "Well, there seems to be someone from there who wishes to speak to you." Nothing more was forthcoming then. Now "*Canewdon*" is a little village situated about three miles from Stambridge on a low hill overlooking the marshes of the Crouch. It is about two miles away from our old home, and we lived within sight of the ancient flint church tower, which is a landmark for many miles around. *Canewdon* is, in fact, the next parish to Stambridge. My own associations with this place are stronger than in the case of my deceased brother, for when I was six years old I walked there every day to a Kindergarten School held at the Rectory. My brother might have been there once or twice in his life.

I was so impressed with the medium getting this name that I arranged with her by letter for a private sitting which took place twelve days later at her house at 50 Westbourne Park Road. At this sitting, during which the medium did not go into a trance, a very good description of Frank's personal appearance was given together with his name "Frank." At the end of the sitting I recalled to Mrs. Brittain the "*Canuter*" incident and asked her how she came to give this word. She replied, "Oh, that funny word! I remember! I will tell you. I saw a boy in an oak tree, or it might have been an apple tree. He peeped over a branch and I heard him say, 'this is *Canuter*,' but I could not tell that before all those people. They would have laughed at me. So I just said, 'do you know *Canuter*?'" It is rather curious that the name *Canewdon* has often been given at sittings. It appeared for instance at my first sitting with Mrs. Leonard on March 28, 1922. I was accompanied to this sitting by Mr. B. E. C. Davis, M.A., Lecturer in English Literature in the University of London, who made

shorthand notes. During the train journey to Oakleigh Park, Mr. Davis, in a conversation about historical Essex, mentioned the fact that he had once visited Canewdon. I then related to him the above psychic incident. Towards the end of the sitting with Mrs. Leonard, whom I had never seen before that day, and who did not know my name, "Feda," who had been describing a bridge, spoke as follows :

FEDA. "He (my brother) says the name "C" is connected with it—rather a long name—its more than one syllable—(what's that) Canterbury no it can't be Canterbury—Can—Can—Cana—Cana—Can—Canadon. (I was careful to refrain from giving any assistance.

S. G. S.)

S. G. S. Just say that word again, Feda.

F. Cana—Canadon (I spell as pronounced by Feda, S. G. S.).

F. The people call it that. He says they are a funny people there—They keep together—they're clinging—"conservative" he calls them—looking upon themselves as a class apart from the rest.

S. G. S. Try to describe the place, Feda.

F. It seem as if it's away from London. Feda don't feel it's a town—a sort of place with wide spaces as if there were no shops or trams.

[*Note.*—This particular way of pronouncing the word by Feda is interesting. Throughout history there have been many variations in the pronunciation of the name of this village ranging from "Canweedon" to "Canudon" and "Cannadon."

The modern pronunciation is "Can-u-don," the u being pronounced as in "tube." Among the native peasantry of the place it is often spoken of as "Cannadon" exactly as given by Feda. Through my early associations with the place I was perfectly familiar with this latter pronunciation, but I feel certain that Frank would have said "Can-u-don."

The description of the place by Feda is rather vague, but the expressions "funny people," "conservative," "looking upon themselves as a class

apart," are all appropriate in a general way and suggest an isolated community, a rather out-of-the-world place. Canewdon is in fact four miles from a railway station, and until recently there was at least one inhabitant who had never been in a train.

The name "Canewdon" was again spelled out at an Ouija sitting with Mrs. Travers-Smith, held in May, 1923. At the time my hand was *not* resting on the slider.]

At a second sitting with Mrs. Brittain on July 22, 1919, at which the medium went into a trance my brother again purported to communicate, speaking a few words in the North Country accent we used at home. The sitting, however, was not very evidential. Fairly good personal descriptions of my brother were given by Mrs. Cannock and other platform clairvoyants, but no very remarkable evidence was secured until the present series of sittings with Mrs. Cooper.

On August 28, 1921, I received a letter from Mrs. B. M'Kenzie, Hon. Secretary of the British Psychic College, informing me that a sitting with Mrs. Cooper had been arranged for September 1st, and that I was at liberty to bring a friend. The question arises—How much could the officials of the Psychic College be expected to know of my private affairs? At that time I had been a member of the College for a little over a year, but with the exception of one experiment with the Crewe Circle in August, 1920, and a Bessinet séance in July, 1921, I had had sittings with no other medium at the College. The following would be a fairly exact summary of the facts which, without elaborate enquiry and special detective work, the College officials could be expected to know :

1. My name and the address "Scratton Lodge," Brook Road, Prittlewell, Essex.
2. That I was a recognised teacher in the Faculty of Science in the University of London.
3. That I was very interested in psychic science and that I knew the medium Mrs. A. Brittain and her husband who introduced me to the College.

4. That I had lost a brother in the war. From the report of the Bessinet séance at the end of July, which I sent to Mrs. M'Kenzie, she might have learnt that my brother's name was *Frank*, but nothing else respecting him.
5. That in May, 1920, I had published an article in *Light* on Einstein: the Mathematician as a Mystic.

I have no reason to believe that any of these facts were communicated to Mrs. Cooper, whom I met on September 1st as a complete stranger.

#### SECTION 1.

My first two sittings with Mrs. Cooper were not very evidential, and the supernatural information obtained was not of that clear-cut and conclusive character which is apparent in the later sittings. I have thought it advisable, however, to give a detailed account of Sittings 1 and 2—first, in order to give some general impression of what Mrs. Cooper's sittings are like, and next, as an illustration of the way in which a communicator comes upon the scene. The notes of these two sittings were written from memory at the end of the séance before leaving the room.

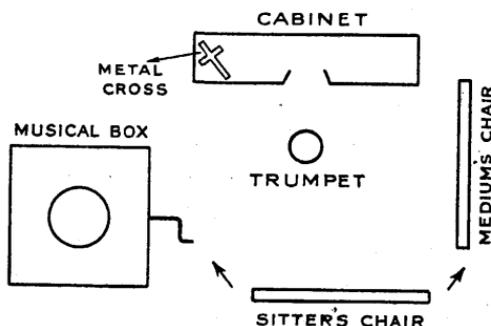
#### *Sitting No. 1.*

2.25 p.m. September 1, 1921.

*Present:* MRS. BLANCHE COOPER (medium).  
S. G. SOAL.

I arrived at the British Psychic College at 2.25 p.m. and was met by Mrs. M'Kenzie, who welcomed me and informed me that I should find Mrs. Cooper waiting in a séance room at the top of the building. I found this room, in which a musical box was playing, and knocked at the door, which was opened by Mrs. Cooper whom I did not remember having seen before. She said she was expecting a sitter, but did not know whether it would be a lady or a gentleman. Mrs. Cooper shut the door

and turned the key in the lock and then pulled a heavy curtain across the door. The window of the room was closely shuttered, so that no light could enter from the street. Above the fireplace a shaded electric light was burning controlled by a switch near the door. A cupboard in the corner of the room contained some old clothes. The furniture of the room consisted of three plain wooden chairs, a musical box, and a "cabinet," about five feet high, and of rectangular cross-section 2' by 1'. The front face of this cabinet was formed of a pair of wooden folding doors opened so as to leave down the centre a long vertical slit of about 2" aperture. Resting on the floor in a corner at the bottom of the cabinet was a small metal cross about a foot long, illuminated with phosphorescent paste. The medium informed me that this cross had been used while she was developing her mediumship with Mrs. Leonard, but was not in use at present. The medium arranged the musical box and chairs as shown in the plan, and told me I should have to keep the musical box wound up with my left hand. She also explained how to start and stop the box. Standing immediately in front of the cabinet aperture and about a foot away was a large light hollow cardboard cone called the "trumpet" which rested on a broad end, diameter eight inches.



The above plan is not drawn to scale, but is only intended to give a general idea of the arrangement of the séance room. The measurements given in the text are fairly accurate.

The medium explained that during the sitting this trumpet was levitated in the air and that the "spirits" spoke through it. Having arranged the chairs as shown in the plan the medium left her own chair a moment to switch off the light. In total darkness she groped her way back to her chair and asked me to take hold of her left hand with my right. This attitude was maintained throughout the whole sitting. With my left hand I had at intervals of about ten minutes to wind up the musical box, which kept repeating the same record.

After we had been sitting in the dark for perhaps three minutes Mrs. Cooper asked me if I could see a light. I looked round and said I could see nothing. She replied, "You will see the light presently." At the end of about another two minutes I noticed a very dim amorphous patch of light moving slowly about in front of my face. It seemed at a distance of about nine inches away. The musical box played loudly all the time. This light soon grew fairly bright and took the form of a disc of the size of a crown piece. It was never still, but dodged about in the circle space, disappearing and after a minute or so reappearing again. When I reached out stealthily with my left hand to touch it the light would always recede in the direction of the cabinet. Mrs. Cooper said that the light was produced by a spirit and that I had better speak to this spirit and ask it its name. I therefore said, "Are you a relative of mine?" Thereupon the disc of light made three complete vertical oscillations, which in the spiritualist code signifies "Yes." Just then the medium said she could see clairvoyantly a letter "J" upside down, and she asked me if that meant anything to me. I said "No." I then addressed the light again, saying, "If you are a relative of mine spell out your name by moving the light." Deliberately and slowly the patch of light made six complete vertical oscillations. I asked for this to be repeated, and called out A B C D E F at each movement of the light. This I understood to be the first letter of the word intended, *i.e.* the letter "F." I asked the spirit to try to give the next letter, but nothing more was attempted. The medium asked if this

letter was correct, but I merely said "I think perhaps it might be." The medium then asked me to turn off the box and to join her in singing a few verses of "Abide with Me." I did my best, but could not remember the words. During the singing no lights or other phenomena were observed. When the hymn was finished I was asked to turn on the music again. Immediately the box had started to play, I heard, apparently close to my ear, a rather deep toned but not very strong voice saying, "I am so glad to see you—so glad you have come—Sam, I want you to know that it is really me."

S. Try to tell me your name.

VOICE. Sam, it's really me, Frank.

S. Frank, I wonder if you remember the old house where we used to live.

F. Yes, yes, dear old place.

S. I am glad you remember. Try to imagine yourself in the garden and tell me where you would come to if you crossed over the bridge.

F. Into the field where we used to play.

[Note.—I had not expected this answer, but it is perfectly correct and really apt. I had actually expected him to say "If you keep on you will come into the grove (a copse where we used to roam). This copse, however, is separated from the bridge over the moat by a pasture field some two hundred yards wide which was a favourite playground when we were boys. I had expected that the communicator's mind would leap over this field to the copse beyond.]

(Pause.)

After an interval.

F. Nineteen eighteen. Nineteen eighteen. The year of my passing.

S. That is almost exactly three years ago, isn't it?

[Note.—My brother was killed in September, 1918.]

S. Frank, I wonder if you would remember the names of any of the boys who used to play with you when we lived at the old house.

F. The answer was inarticulate.

S. Well never mind. Can you remember anything at all about the old house?

F. Pond there.

S. Yes there was a pond. Have you anything to say about it?

F. Dooks, ducks.

[*Note.*—Pond is correct. There is a conspicuous pond at the old Rectory, but the answer may well have been a guess. At one time there were ducks on the pond, but the answer might easily have been a reaction by association to the word "pond."]

S. Frank, can you remember the day you and I rode to Chelmsford?

F. Yes, yes. Father was very angry.

[*Note.*—I did not expect this answer, but it happens to be relevant. My brother and I rode to Chelmsford only on one occasion in the summer of 1911. I was at that time about twenty-one years of age and I had cause to remember that on the day following this excursion my father was extremely angry with me, although the matter had no connection with our visit to Chelmsford. In my memory I have always associated the ride to Chelmsford with my father's displeasure on the following day.]

S. Frank, can you remember the village school at all. What was there near the school?

F. Church, church.

[*Note.*—The playground of the village school was separated from the church by a brick wall. At the time I was not thinking of the church but of a steam flour mills at the head of a creek nearby.]

S. Frank, can you remember anything about that church-yard wall in reference to yourself?

F. Fell off. (Natural answer to such a question.)

S. Yes, you fell off, but what did you do to yourself?

F. The word "head" was heard, but the rest was inarticulate.

[*Note.*—I asked this question to see if he would mention breaking his two upper front teeth. An accident whose results were ever afterwards slightly noticeable.]

S. Tell me anything else you remember.

F. Ernest, Ernest.

[Note.—I do not know whom this name refers to.]

S. Who was Ernest ?

F. (Inarticulate.)

S. Frank, have you met Uncle since you passed over ?

F. Seemed some attempt to make a "G" sound, but the name of the Uncle which was George was not given.

(At this point a voice whispered "I am Nada. This spirit must have a rest. He has been working very hard.")

The light now reappeared floating in the air. The medium called to my brother, "Try to show yourself to us." I do not attempt to explain the appearances which followed, but for the sake of completeness I merely record them. What seemed to be the rough outline of a human ear showed on the disc of floating light. This appeared and disappeared and then reappeared. There followed what seemed to be the outline of part of a hand showing four fingers from the knuckle to the finger tips. These "fingers" made the motion of opening and closing and appeared as dark outlines in the centre of the patch of light. No "thumb" could be seen. Then something was shown in the light which looked rather like a pair of lips. I called out "Open your mouth," and the lips made a definite motion, as of parting, and when I cried "Shut your mouth," the lips closed. I tried this several times. Then something was shown which looked like a hooked nose seen in profile. Considerable time was spent over these appearances, and when the light had disappeared the voice of Frank was heard again. It appeared excited.

F. Sam, did you see my ear, my hand, and my mouth ?

S. Yes, I saw something which looked like a hand and ear and mouth, but what was that last thing you were trying to show ?

F. It was part of my forehead.

[Note.—Frank's nose was straight, but his forehead was decidedly arched.]

A rather deep voice was now heard to say "Power is going."

The medium explained that the voice which had just spoken was that of "Afid" her Eastern guide.

The voice of Frank was heard again.

F. Sam, I won't say "Goodbye" because you will be coming again.

S. I hope so, goodbye.

The medium then said, "Turn off the box," and when this was done we concluded the sitting by singing the last verse of "Abide with Me."

On consideration I came to the conclusion that while there was no very strong evidence of supernormal information at this sitting, yet the results were sufficiently interesting to warrant a further trial. I therefore arranged with Mrs. Ford, the Assistant Secretary of the Psychic College, for another sitting to be held on Thursday, September 8, at 2.30 p.m.

*Sitting No. 2.*

Thursday, September 8, 1921, 2.30 p.m.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER (medium).  
S. G. SOAL.

The conditions were the same as at the first sitting.

The patch of light soon made its appearance and I observed in quick succession what seemed to be the dark outlines of a hand and an ear. I was also touched lightly on the knee by what might have been the trumpet. We sang a few verses of the hymn, and when the box was restarted, the voice which I recognised as the one which I had heard at the previous sitting commenced to speak.

F. Sam, I am so glad to see you again. Sam, I was with you yesterday.

S. Yes, and where did I go yesterday?

F. Dogg—Dogger—Dog—Dogget.

S. Doggets ? That's right.

[*Note.*—On the previous afternoon Wednesday, September 7, I paid a visit to a friend who lives close to our old home, Little Stambridge Rectory. To reach this friend's house I took the 2 o'clock bus from Southend-on-Sea to the little market town of Rochford and then walked the remaining distance of two miles across the fields of a large farm called "Doggets Farm." This farm, adjoining as it does the rectory fields, was a familiar haunt of our boyhood days, and on this particular afternoon I strayed from the footpath and spent an hour or so wandering round the plantations, etc., for old times sake. I then proceeded to my friend's house. My present address is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles away from Doggets Farm and my visits to this place are not more frequent than once in three months. On Sept. 7 I did not decide to pay this visit until 1 o'clock in the afternoon and even the people at home did not know where I was going when I set out after lunch. Moreover, on reaching Southend-on-Sea I first took a tram towards Thorpe Bay which lies in quite another direction, as I had some business to do there. I then returned by tram and walked down High Street to Victoria Corner, where I caught the Rochford bus. Had I been followed by strangers I fancy I should have noticed them if they had tried to follow me over the deserted fields of Doggets Farm. Southend-on-Sea is forty miles from London, and assuming private detectives to have been employed by the medium or Colledge, the one word "Dogget" would be a somewhat meagre "bag" after such an exciting chase.

It may of course be suggested that what the medium actually said was "Dog" and that an uncertain second syllable was added when she divined that "Dog" was not effective. Against this explanation it must be urged that "Dog" was not a rational answer to the question I asked. The actual answer I anticipated was "Reeves" (the name of the people I went to see) or "Rochford" or "Stambridge." Doggets, however, was an excellent answer. I have given this detailed discussion

not because the incident itself is important, but merely because I made such an analysis at the time of the sitting.]

- S. Now Frank, do you remember the *hut* we had at the top of the big field ?
- F. Yes, Sam, I remember.
- S. Well, can you tell me what we used to do at the hut ?
- F. We built a fire and sat telling stories.
- S. Quite right. That's very good. Tell me who used to be with us.
- F. Charley.
- S. Not very often. Charley sat once or twice in the hut. Can't you remember who was most often with us ?
- F. W—War—Warra—(not very distinct but the first syllable certainly sounded like *War*).
- S. (After some unsuccessful attempts to get the word)— All right, never mind that now. Can you remember anything about the inside of the hut ?
- F. Twelve bricks.

[*Note.*—In the autumn of 1910, when I was twenty years of age, my brother Frank and myself with the assistance of two other boys named Walter Valentine and Percy Paternoster cleared out a hollow in a thick hedge on the borders of a copse (called the grove) near Little Stambridge Rectory. With ivy and interlacing branches we formed a roof and in the centre of the floor space we sunk a brick fireplace. During the whole of September and part of October we spent many of our evenings in this hut in which we had constructed rough seats. Within the brick fireplace a large wood fire was always burning and round this fire we sat telling stories or reading stories aloud from books until "the evening star washes the dusk with silver," and the mists rose in the meadows.

It will be seen therefore that the answer "built a fire and sat telling stories" together with the mention of the bricks<sup>1</sup> was as good an answer as could have been devised in this limited number of words. At the time of the sitting I was interested to see how nearly an answer of equal correctness could have been approximated

<sup>1</sup>The actual number of bricks would not exceed four or five.

to by guesswork. I therefore interviewed about a dozen persons to whom the existence of the hut was quite unknown and questioned them as follows: "Imagine yourself to be a fraudulent medium who is impersonating my dead brother. I say to you 'Do you remember the hut we had at the top of the big field? Tell me what we used to do there. Now you must make a guess in not more than eight or nine words.'"

Judging by the results of the little questionnaire given below, guessing is by no means a good method for the fraudulent medium.]

- S. Now we will leave the hut. Do you remember the first time I took you to London?
- F. Yes, Sam, it seemed very wonderful. I saw the River Thames for first time.

[*Note.*—This visit took place when Frank was about 12 years old in the summer of 1912. It would undoubtedly have left a strong impression on his mind. The reference to the Thames is interesting. On reaching Liverpool St. from Rochford we took the Underground to Mark Lane with the intention of visiting the Tower. On leaving the station we walked down to the river and stood for some time watching the shipping and I remember pointing out St. Paul's to Frank. Thus the first real glimpse my brother had of London was the view from the River Thames and therefore this reference to the Thames seems very apt.]

- S. Then where did we go?
- F. Tuss—Two—swords. (If this is intended for Tussaud's it is quite incorrect as we never visited the place at all.)
- S. Where did we go in the afternoon?
- F. Wild—wild animals. Z—z—zoo.

[*Note.*—We spent the afternoon at the Zoo, but the answer might easily have been a guess.]

- S. Frank, I have in my pocket a photo of a group of boys taken at your school. Could you tell me whereabouts you are on the photo.
- F. Yes, remember very well. I am fourth from left.

[*Note.*—Fourth from left is correct, but the photo was very familiar to me.]

(Interval of silence.)

NAME.	ADDRESS.	REPLY.	COMMENTS BY S. G. S.
1. Mr. J. Arthur Hill -	"Claremont," Thornton, Bradford.	"Flew kites."	We flew kites in the same field, but not at the time we had the hut.
2. Capt. Stubbs - -	7 Falklyn Avenue, Sefton Park, Liverpool.	Played Indians.	We did not play Indians at this period.
3. Mrs. H. Rankin -	Broomhills, Rochford, Essex.	Played cricket.	We did not play cricket near the hut.
4. Mr. H. Rankin -	Broomhills, Rochford, Essex.	Had a good feed there.	We seldom ate anything in the hut.
5. Mr. H. Sloman -	42 Westminster Drive, Southend-on-Sea.	Played robbers.	Untrue.
6. Mrs. H. Sloman -	42 Westminster Drive, Southend-on-Sea.	Held a secret society.	Untrue.
7. Mr. E. Hunt - -	22 Westminster Drive, Southend-on-Sea.	Imagined you were cow-boys.	Untrue.
8. Mr. A. Shaghoiain -	1696 Sitter St., San Francisco.	Buried treasure there.	Untrue.
9. Mr. A. L. Gregson -		Played cards.	Never on any occasion.
10. Mr. Thomas Barnett	West Street, Prittlewell.	Chopped up wood and did odd jobs.	We did chop wood to make the fire.
11. Mr. Pascoe - -	High Street, Helston, Cornwall.	Thought you were smugglers.	Untrue.
12. Mr. Chapman - -	Rochford, Essex.	Planned desperate deeds.	Untrue.

- F. Bicycles, bicycles.  
 S. Are you referring to what we were speaking about last time ?

F. No, Sam, two bicycles.

S. Do you mean the ride to Chelmsford ?

F. No. Two bicycles. Sam, I am afraid I can't get it.

S. Never mind. Perhaps it will come to you presently.

(At this stage Nada interposed saying "This spirit is very powerful. You bring a great deal of power. . . . He must have a rest now.")

The voice ceased and lights appeared for a short time.  
A hand appeared outlined in the light.)

(After an interval.)

F. Sam, I've got it now. Pat was with us at the hut. Pat.

S. That's very good. You've got it at last.

F. Yes, Sam, you see how we can get things through when you don't worry us.

[*Note.*—It will be recalled that earlier in the Sitting in connection with the hut I had asked the question "who was with us in the hut?" and the answer had been "Charley," succeeded by something which sounded like "War." Now the two boys who helped us to build the hut and who were constantly with us were Walter Valentine sometimes called "Waller" and Percy Paternoster whom we invariably called "Pat." Charley is my living brother who seldom came to sit in the hut. It will be noticed that at the time when the question was asked and the name "Pat" was in the field of the sitter's consciousness the answer was not forthcoming. The present records are full of similar cases.]

F. Sam, soon I shall be able to speak to you as I used to.  
 (Interval.)

F. Friday, Friday.

S. What about Friday ?

F. The birthday into a new life. The day of passing into a new life.

[*Note.*—The only information we possess with regard to the exact date of my brother's death is a letter from an Army Chaplain addressed from 3rd Casualty Clearing Station and dated September 6, 1918 (no day of week

mentioned). The letter contains the phrase "we buried him to-day." A probable inference would be that Frank died either on September 6, or on the preceding day, September 5. Now I find that September 6, 1918, is on a Friday. I had of course seen the Chaplain's letter when it arrived, but had never thought about the day of the week. The result, if not a chance coincidence, might have been derived by sub-conscious computation from the date September 6.]

[Additional Note.—We have records now to show that Frank died on September 5, 1918, which day is Thursday. He was therefore buried on a Friday.]

NADA. The power is nearly gone.

F. Goodbye, Sam.

S. Goodbye.

AFID. Power is going.

(Sitting concludes.)

I shall next relate a series of spontaneous incidents in which the evidence for supernormality is particularly strong. These are scattered throughout the whole series of sittings and are arranged here under separate heads. In each case the record is copied direct from my case book.

#### No. 1.—INCIDENT OF THE TWO BICYCLES.

##### *Sitting No. 5.*

Monday, September 19, 1921, 8 p.m.

This was a group sitting at which seven persons were present including Mrs. Ford. At such a sitting all the persons were linked up by holding hands, the left hand of the person on the extreme left having to manipulate the musical box, while the medium sat on the extreme right. The trumpet would come to one person and then to another giving short messages to each. The sitters in the immediate vicinity of the person to whom the voice was speaking could generally hear the words, but those who were farther off could not. Quite early in the sitting the voice of Frank spoke to me.

- F. Sam, I'm glad to see you again. I want to give you that test.
- S. I'm pleased to see you. What test is it?
- F. Two bicycles. Two bicycles.
- S. Is it what you were speaking about last time?
- F. No, Sam, it was two bicycles. Sam, I can't get it.
- F. Will come again a little later.
- The voice then moved away to someone else. Towards the end of the séance it came again to me.
- F. Two bicycles, two bicycles.
- S. Yes, what about them?
- F. One went so fast it ran away from the other.
- S. Now I think I know what you're driving at. Can you remember the place where it happened?
- F. Yes, Sam, it begins with "D." Long hill and sandy road. D<sup>1</sup>—D—many ferns.
- S. Try to get the name.
- F. D—D—difficult, try another time.

The trumpet passed away again.

[*Note.*—When I heard the phrase "one ran away from the other," I recalled at once the incident to which the communicator was referring. One afternoon in August, 1914, my brother and I rode together on bicycles to Danbury Common, which is about eighteen miles from Southend-on-Sea and is one of the highest points in Essex. The return journey from Danbury is a long downhill for about a couple of miles. We mounted our machines and let them rip. Frank soon took the lead and, outpacing me, disappeared from sight round a bend. When I reached level ground to my dismay I could see nothing of him and feared that he had taken the wrong turning. I dismounted and waited for some time by the side of the road, but when he did not appear I was disturbed and imagined he might have met with some serious accident and was perhaps, even then, lying unconscious somewhere on the road. However, I decided to ride on and to my relief I overtook him

<sup>1</sup>Throughout this record D— P—, etc. (with a dash), mean that the sounds of these letters were articulated, *i.e.* the *D* sound not letter *D*.

some two miles farther on near Woodham Ferris. He had dismounted there and was waiting for me. To the best of my knowledge neither of us ever mentioned this incident to a living soul. The mention of the "long hill" and the "ferns" (really bracken) and the "sandy road" are truly excellent bits of description. As one enters the Danbury district the roads become bordered with bracken; indeed, there are acres of bracken on each side of the road, which is of yellow sand. When we also add the letter "D," it will be seen that we have a remarkable incident in which the psychic showed knowledge that probably belonged to only one living person.]

NO. 2—INCIDENT OF THE "STARBOBS."

*Sitting No. 6.*

*September 20, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER (medium).  
S. G. SOAL.*

(After an interval Frank speaks as follows:)

- F. In the barn. Set fire alight. Starbobs flew out.  
Sam, this is important. Starbobs.
- S. What sort of a fire was it?
- F. With bricks.
- S. Was it outside the barn or inside?
- F. Outside—near the—(inarticulate).
- S. Were the starbobs burnt?
- F. None of them were hurt.
- S. Was I there?
- F. No you could not come.
- S. Who was with you that day?
- F. Percy.
- S. Were the starbobs old or young?
- F. Some old and some young.

Nothing more was forthcoming about this matter.

[*Note.*—The scene of the above happenings was Little Stambridge Rectory, and the time was the summer of 1909. The old Rectory at which we lived for 12 years is situated two miles from Rochford

Railway Station. A lonely place, it has attached to it 34 acres of glebe land, and about 40 yards from the house is a large dilapidated outbuilding, weather boarded and thatched, and known to the family as "The Barn." The Barn was divided into two compartments of which the smaller was called "The Stable." Hence when I heard the phrase "the barn," this building was at once pictured on my mental retina. I found by enquiries after the sitting had concluded that the word "Starbobs" conveyed nothing to the mind of the medium, but immediately I heard it I recognised at once a local nickname used by boys in this particular district for the starlings which in the winter settle in their thousands in the copses and groves. In the evening they make the air clamorous with their cries, and the immense flocks as they fly to their roosting places pass overhead like a darkening scarf. At the time of which I write my brother was about ten years of age and spent most of his time out of doors climbing trees after eggs and young birds. I have made enquiries about the word "Starbobs" and find that it is in fairly common use among boys in the Rochford district. It was certainly used by Frank and his companions. (See Walter Valentine's statement (p. 591) in Appendix.) These boys would organise massacres of the starlings on winter evenings. Frank's old companions are, however, now widely separated, and I would hazard an opinion that "Starbobs" is about the last word that a fraudulent medium would be expected to get by enquiries in the district.

But to continue with the incident. When I heard the words "in the barn. Set fire alight. Starbobs flew out," I conjured up in my mind an imaginary picture of boys lighting a fire inside the barn and the half-burned birds crawling across the floor. But immediately the words, "a fire with bricks. Outside—near the —" were said I vaguely recalled having seen such a fire in bricks. On the following Saturday I rode across to Stambridge to interview

Walter Valentine, who was perhaps the most regular companion of my brother at this period. I asked him if he could remember any fire that he and Frank made outside the barn. He answered at once, "We had a fire in some bricks just in front of the Stable."

He said he thought it would be "just under the eaves of the thatch" and he seemed quite clear that the fire was "in the summertime, when the thatch would be full of nesting starlings." He could not actually remember the smoke driving the starlings out of the thatch, but thought "it very likely happened," and that "he was certain the thatch was full of young starlings at that time." My sister, Miss Lottie Soal, corroborates "the fire in bricks outside the barn," and she says that "Walter and Frank had it burning every day for more than a week." It is quite certain that I must have seen this fire myself and I have an indistinct recollection of seeing the brick fireplace in front of the barn. The statement "you could not come" would possibly mean that I was busy with my studies all day in the house and was unable to join the boys in their play. All members of the family corroborate the fact that there were scores of starlings' nests in the thatch of the barn. That picture of the upward-curling smoke rising into the thatch and disturbing the birds never entered my conscious mind until Valentine showed me the position of the fire. I should add that Valentine, though uneducated, is intelligent and has a reliable memory. On the same day on which I saw Valentine I also interviewed Percy Paternoster, who was mentioned in the account of the séance. He was unable to recollect any fire outside the barn, but reminded me that at about that period he only saw Frank on very rare occasions, and it was not until 1910 that he became a regular companion. Since "Pat" lived a mile away from us, I think it improbable that he ever saw this fire. It is practically certain that to-day Valentine would not use

the childish word "Starbobs"; he would probably say "starlings." There is, however, no reason to suppose that he has been interviewed by any agent of the Psychic College. It would be quite characteristic for my brother to relate an incident connected with starlings since during his lifetime he was intensely interested in birds and their ways, collecting eggs, bringing up young birds, etc., while I had scarcely any interest in them at all. It is just possible that the incident is a fabrication of my own unconscious mind founded on the memory of the fire which I had seen. That is, the incident may be a mixture of truth and fabrication.]

NO. 3 INCIDENT. "FATHER M'KENNA."

*Sitting No. 4.*

*Tuesday, September 13, 1921, 2.30 p.m.*

*Present: MRS. COOPER (medium).  
S. G. SOAL.*

(Towards the middle of the séance, after a pause, my brother begins to speak again.)

- F. Father Father M'Ken.  
 S. Father what?  
 F. Father M'Ken—Kenna—Father M'Kenna.  
 S. Yes, what about Father M'Kenna?  
 NADA. I hear him say church, church.  
 F. Father's M'Kenna's church.  
 S. What did you do at Father M'Kenna's church?  
 F. Helped him with his lights.  
 S. That's very good. Can you remember the name of the church?  
 [Note.—I do not think I ever knew the name of the church (S. G. S.).]  
 F. Electric. It was his lights.  
 S. Yes, but I asked the name of the church.  
 F. St.—St. (inarticulate).  
 S. I couldn't hear that. Try again.

F. It was the Sacred—can't get it, Sam. The Sacred—can't get any more.

[*Note.*—It was well known to the family that in the year 1915 Frank was slightly acquainted with Father M'Kenna and sometimes used to visit him at his "Church of the Sacred Heart," which was situated off the London Road, Southend-on-Sea. On one occasion he helped Father M'Kenna to adjust his electric lights. At home Frank often spoke of Father M'Kenna, who appears to have amused him. I remember him relating how on his first visit he addressed Father M'Kenna as Mr. M'Kenna and that gentleman replied "Father M'Kenna, my boy, Father M'Kenna." The word "Sacred," which was recorded before leaving the séance room, is certainly part of the name of the church, and I cannot remember ever having heard it, or ever having seen the church. It is interesting to note that this reference to electric lights is the first in the whole series of sittings to the subject of electricity which was a predominant interest in my brother's life.

Since the incident occurred six years previous to the sitting and in a town 40 miles from London, and was known to perhaps only two or three people in Southend, a fraudulent medium would have experienced some difficulty in ferreting it out.]

No. 4 INCIDENT. "THE CHRISTMAS PRESENT."

*Sitting No. 7.*

Wednesday, October 5, 1921, 3.30 p.m.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER (medium).  
S. G. SOAL.

(Towards the middle of the sitting Frank speaks again.)

- F. A Christmas Present. Christmas present you gave me.  
S. Yes, I remember. What was it I gave you?  
F. Electric thing, with two handles.  
S. That's very good. Remember anything else about it?

F. Shock, shocks.

S. That's right.

[*Note.*—At Xmas, 1912, I bought Frank a small induction coil as a present. This was the only Christmas present that I can remember ever having given him. It pleased him immensely and he amused himself by connecting the coil to a dry battery and giving people shocks. The mention of "two handles" is a most definite piece of description, since the machine had two bright metal handles which people held for the purpose of getting shocks. Two or three people outside our family may have seen the coil, but I do not think that anyone except ourselves would know that it was given to Frank as a Christmas present. The coil is still in my possession.]

(Frank speaking again.)

F. It was green. Sam, I would like to connect it up to a battery.

S. I put it away with your other things, but you won't ever connect it to a battery again, Frank.

NADA interposing. "You don't know what he'll do."

F. Try to connect it up, Sam.

S. I will. Have they any electricity where you are, Frank?

F. Inarticulate.

[*Note.*—The colour of the coil was a bright green. Altogether the incident provides excellent evidence of supernormal power on the part of the medium, but does not go beyond the content of my own mind.]

#### NO. 5 INCIDENT. "THE SCALDED HAND."

*Sitting No. 8.*

*Thursday, October 13, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(At the beginning of the sitting after Nada had spoken Frank begins:)

F. Sam, a test—what you did to your hand.

S. What did I do to my hand?

- F. Burnt with water. It was very upsetting time.  
S. Tell me what you remember about it.  
F. Mother was very upset. Spoilt exam—examination.  
It was Sunday, Sam. You upset the (inarticulate).  
S. I understand. Can you remember anything else ?  
F. Yes, Sam. Went to Doctor about it.  
S. Quite right, what else. What was the name of the  
Doctor ?  
F. (Inarticulate) Can't get it, Sam.  
S. Well never mind the name. See if you can remember  
anything else.  
F. Remember the day before.  
S. The day before what ?  
F. Day before hand was done.  
S. Well, what do you remember ?  
F. It was wet and C—cl—cla—Claude—Claude came with  
gun.  
S. Why, Frank, I had quite forgotten that. What did  
Claude do ?  
F. Round field for hares.  
S. That's very good.  
F. You see, Sam, I remember things better than you do.

Pause.

[*Note.*—This is one of the best incidents, although  
none of the information given was unknown to me.  
The facts are as follows. On Sunday evening the  
first week in June, 1913, I upset by accident a large  
pan of water (almost boiling) over my right hand.  
I had good cause to remember the event for it  
happened on the eve of my M.A. examination and  
on account of the injury to my right hand I had  
to postpone taking the examination until the following  
June. On Monday morning I saw Doctor A. C.  
Lewis of Rochford who bandaged my hand and put  
it in a sling. My mother was naturally much upset  
about the affair more on account of the examination  
than anything else. When my brother mentioned  
about "Claude and the gun," I at once remembered  
that on the Saturday evening before the accident  
Frank and myself accompanied Claude Butcher, a

friend of ours, round the Rectory fields on the chance of starting a hare or rabbit. About that period Claude Butcher used to come with his rifle almost every Saturday afternoon or evening, Saturday being his only free day. Frank and I invariably accompanied him on these occasions.

We have in this incident very clear evidence of information being acquired by Mrs. Cooper in a supernatural way.]

No. 6 INCIDENT. "THE BIG TREE."

*Sitting No. 13.*

*Thursday, November 10, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(At the beginning of the sitting Frank speaks as follows:)

- F. So glad you've come again, Sam. I've thought of a good test.
- S. Then let us have it, Frank.
- F. It's about the big tree, Sam. Do you understand?
- S. I know what you used to call the big tree.
- F. Built hut right at the top. Do you know what I mean?
- S. I know very well, Frank. Can you tell me where the big tree was?
- F. Near Grove gate, Sam. Where wood-cock used to be.
- S. That's excellent. The woodcock is not there now, is it?
- F. Gone long ago.
- S. Tell me what you could see from the top of the big tree.
- F. Could see River—riv—Couch.
- S. Are you sure you could see the River Crouch from the top of that tree?
- F. Quite sure, Sam. We often saw it.
- S. What else could you see?
- F. Inarticulate. (The voice ceases to speak here.)

[*Note.*—There was a particularly tall elm which stood close by a gate leading into a copse about two

hundred yards from the Rectory. This copse was christened by the family "The grove," and the wooden gate the "The grove gate." At the top of this tall tree Frank and another boy, Walter Valentine, in the summer of 1914 constructed a kind of nest or eyrie in which they would sit for hours. My mother remembers this hut very well. She was in fear that the boys would break their necks. The reference to the woodcock is very remarkable. The bole of this elm which Frank always called the "big tree" was somewhat hollow and rotten at the base and had projecting from it a curious piece of timber which bore a rough semblance to a large bird or cock. Seen from a distance it certainly did resemble a cock and for several years Charley—my eldest brother—always spoke of it as the "wooden cock." This piece of rotten wood disappeared somewhere about the year 1907 or 1908. Frank must have heard us talk about it often and have seen it himself when a small boy.

But perhaps the most interesting feature is Frank's statement that "you could see the River Crouch" from the top of the big tree. I had never myself climbed to the nest or eyrie and at the time of the sitting I had no idea that the Crouch would be visible from such a comparatively low altitude. When I asked the question at the séance I expected him to reply, "you can see Prittlewell Church," or "you look down on the grove." On a Saturday, in October, 1921, to satisfy my curiosity on this point I actually climbed to the topmost branches of this elm—no easy feat owing to the slenderness of the higher boughs. To my surprise I could plainly see the silver streak of the Crouch over the top of a gentle rise to the north. It is, of course, just possible that the boys might have mentioned seeing the Crouch and that I had heard them at the time and forgotten it. The incident, however, is certainly interesting in its unexpectedness.]

[Note added April 23, 1925.]

Yesterday (April 22) I saw Walter Valentine and

made a little experiment. I had not previously mentioned to him anything about the "Big Tree Incident" and "the view of the Crouch" as I felt at the time that the matter could be best tested by climbing the tree myself. Yesterday, however, it occurred to me to put to Walter Valentine without any warning the same question that I had previously asked Frank at the séance. I asked suddenly "Do you remember the hut at the top of the big tree?" He answered "Yes, very well." I then asked "What could you see from the top?" Without the slightest hesitation Valentine replied, "The white sails of the yachts on the River Crouch."

The purporting communicator and the living person therefore in this case agree that it was the view of the Crouch that impressed them most from "The Big Tree." For Valentine's corroboration see Appendix [A].

NO. 7 INCIDENT. "THE CONAN DOYLE STORY."

*Sitting No. 14.*

*Thursday, November 17, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(After John Ferguson had finished, Frank communicated the following incident:)

- F. Sam, we sat on the grass. You read to us. Do you remember?
- S. Do you mean when we were in the hut?
- F. No, Sam, before hut.
- S. You mean before we made the hut?
- F. Long time before.
- S. What is it you want to tell me?
- F. We sat on the grass and you read a book.
- S. I can't remember the time you mean.
- F. It was more than once, Sam.
- S. What do you mean more than once?
- F. I mean it wasn't finished all at once—sounded like "next week."

S. Well, what did I read to you about ?

F. About—about big animals and birds with teeth.

S. I think I know now what you mean, Frank. Tell me something else about it.

NADA interposing. He's laughing about it. He whispers "yes young fel—my lad."

S. That settles it. I understand perfectly now. It's a good test. Frank do you remember who was with us ?

F. Pat was with us.

S. No, that's wrong.

F. Think it's W—W—

S. Try to get it.

F. W—W—there isn't much power, Sam.

S. Well never mind.

(A pause.)

S. Don't forget to bring John Ferguson next time, Nada.

NADA. He'll be there.

F. Goodbye, Sam.

S. Goodbye, Frank.

AFID. Power is going.

[*Note.*—The incident is a very good one, but it does not go outside my own conscious knowledge. In the summer of 1912, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, "The Lost World," was appearing in monthly instalments in the *Strand Magazine*. Frank and I eagerly looked forward to the successive instalments of this fascinating story, and when the magazine arrived we would take it into the field where, sitting on the grass, I would read it aloud to the others. It was, in fact, the only magazine serial that I ever did read aloud to the boys. "Birds with teeth" refers obviously to the pterodactyl with which Professor Challenger and his companions had such perilous encounters; "big animals" would refer to the dinosaurs and other extinct monsters. The phrase "young fel—my lad" (young fellow my lad) was always on the lips of Lord John Roxton. W—W— is perhaps an abortive attempt to give the name of the boy (Walter Valentine), who with Frank listened

to the story being read. On enquiry I found that Mrs. Cooper had not read "The Lost World."]

There is, I notice, an incorrect statement in Frank's account which I overlooked at the time of the sitting. Frank is wrong in saying that the incident took place "before" the building of the hut. In fact, as the hut was made in 1910, this incident occurred a couple of years later.

NO. 8 INCIDENT. "THE BIG EEL."

*Sitting No. 14.*

*Thursday, November 17, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(Frank was the first voice that spoke in this sitting.

He communicated the following incident and then withdrew in favour of John Ferguson.)

- F. Good afternoon, Sam. I want to tell you something before Ferg comes.
- F. A big eel. We caught it, Sam, in the Moat. Such a big eel.
- S. Say again where you caught it.
- F. M—M—moat. It was near the house.
- S. I remember very well, Frank. Tell me something else about it.
- F. Set lines at night. (Inarticulate)
- S. That's quite right about setting the lines at night.  
Can you remember anything else about the moat?
- F. R—R—rats—bow and arrow.
- S. I know what you mean, but what about the bow and arrow?
- F. For rats. Do you know now, Sam?
- S. Yes, I understand. Can you remember anything else?
- F. Funny birds on moat. Dashed down—dashed down the water.
- S. What did we call those birds?
- F. Inarticulate.
- S. Tell me more about the birds.
- F. Dashed with a big fluster.

- S. That's right, but what is the name of the birds ?  
F. Can't get it. They were wild, Sam, not tame.  
S. I quite understand.

(Pause. Interval after which John Ferguson appears.)

[*Note.*—During the year 1914, Frank and Walter Valentine set lines overnight to try to catch eels in the moat. To everybody's surprise they found one afternoon a huge eel at the end of the line. The same week they caught another as large as the first. The family had not expected that eels of such size lived in the moat. My mother remembers cooking the eels which no one except Frank really liked, as they had a muddy flavour. The getting of the word "moat" is in itself very interesting. What we called the "moat" was in reality a very wide ditch which surrounded the Rectory on three sides. Water-rats abounded in its banks and it is remembered by the whole family that on one occasion Frank made a bow and arrow and succeeded in shooting one or two of these rats. The mention of the birds which "dashed down the water" vividly recalls the moor hens or water hens which made their homes there. Very frequently if one walked unperceived to the edge of the moat one of these birds would scuttle away down the water in a great flurry. We have, therefore, in this incident very definite evidence of supernormal information, although the facts given were in my mind.] [See Appendix A.]

No. 9 INCIDENT. "THE BURIED MEDAL."

*Sitting No. 8.*

*Thursday, October 13, 1921, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

[This incident has a special significance since there is at least a possibility of some of the facts given being known only to the communicator himself. I will first give the record of the sitting and then my brother's account of the developments which took

place afterwards. The incidents given below occurred just before the "Benson" case opened a little later in the same sitting.]

(Frank, who has been speaking, continues, after a pause, as follows :)

- F. Sam, I buried it. In the—  
 S. What was it you buried ?  
 F. I buried it in the hut one day.  
 S. Which hut do you mean ?  
 F. Top of big field. It was a medal, Sam.  
 S. What sort of a medal ?  
 F. (Sounded like) "metal" (but uncertain).  
 S. Where did you get the medal ?  
 F. Given to me by a boy.  
 S. What was the name of the boy ?  
 F. Inarticulate—sounded something like "school."  
 S. Was it a boy at school ?  
 F. Boy at school. It had a piece of chain on it.  
 S. Where did you bury this ?  
 F. In the hut. You weren't there, Sam.  
 S. Was anyone there ?  
 F. Only me, Sam. It was near the fireplace.  
 S. Do you mean where the bricks were ?  
 F. Near the bricks—left hand.  
 S. On the left hand of the fireplace ?  
 F. Left hand of bricks.  
 S. How far away was this from the fireplace ?  
 F. Close to. Not far away.  
 S. Did you tell anyone you buried it ?  
 F. Told no one, Sam.  
 S. Why did you bury it ?  
 F. (Sounded like) "amuse"—it wasn't worth anything.  
 S. Did you have a spade ? Was it very deep ?  
 F. Not deep, Sam. May have sunk a bit now.  
 After a pause I again questioned him.  
 S. Frank, did you bury the medal with a spade ?  
 F. No, Sam, just poked it in with sticks.  
 S. Did I know anything about it ?  
 F. You never saw it, Sam.  
 S. What was there on this medal ?

- F. Can't remember, Sam, it had a piece of chain I carried it by.
- S. Was it very large ?
- F. (Sounded like) "inches" (but not clear).
- S. Try to tell me some more about it.
- F. Not much to tell, Sam—heavy (inarticulate).
- S. Where did you say you got it from ?
- F. Someone gave it me.
- S. Someone at school ?
- F. W—Perhaps at school.
- S. Did Pat or Walter know anything about it.
- F. No, I was by myself—when I—school.
- S. Do you mean when you came back from school ?
- F. Yes, Sam, think it would be then.  
(No more was forthcoming about the medal.)

STATEMENT BY MR. C. W. SOAL.

SCRATTON LODGE,  
BROOK ROAD,  
PRITTLEWELL, ESSEX,  
October 24, 1921.

On Thursday evening of October 13, my brother, Mr. S. G. Soal, showed me the records of a sitting which he had had that day with Mrs. Blanche Cooper at the British Psychic College. These notes purported to be a communication from my deceased brother Frank and indicated the possibility of the finding of a medal under the earthen floor of a hut made by us some years ago in a double hedge near Little Stambridge Rectory. No description was given of this medal except the statements that it was heavy, and had a piece of chain attached. The position of the buried object was indicated fairly exactly by the phrase, "near the brick fireplace." I did not remember my brother possessing any such objects, but he may have done. I remember that the hut was used in the year 1910, and understood that it had fallen to decay since.

On Saturday, October 15, my brother suggested that we should ride over to Stambridge and have a look at the place. Neither of us had any real hopes of finding

anything and I consented to accompany my brother merely for the sake of the ride. We set out at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and reached the Rectory fields sometime after three. We found the hut had fallen in and its floor was overgrown with brambles and undergrowth of various kinds. I stayed near the hut while my brother walked over to the Rectory to borrow a spade and pick from Mr. Williams, the present occupier. It was Mrs. Williams who lent him the spade and pick. On his return we cleared away the brambles and roots and soon found the remains of the old brick fireplace. We delved around this with the pick as the ground was iron hard. Presently we were able to remove some clods with the spade, but at first found nothing. On prising out a large clod on the left-hand side of the fireplace, I detected something metallic sticking out of the underside of the piece of earth. The object was firmly bedded in and from the state of the ground it could not have been put there at all recently, i.e. not during the present hard condition of the earth. It was found at about the depth of three quarters of a spade depth. When extracted it proved to be a disc of lead of about two inches in diameter and nearly a quarter of an inch in thickness. At about half an inch from the circumference a hole had been bored through the disc, probably for the purpose of inserting a chain or string. No chain was however found. The edge of the disc looked as if it had been cut by a chisel from a sheet of lead. There was no inscription or any sign of machine work on the disc, and I cannot conceive for what purpose it could have been used unless as a lad's plaything to be whirled about at the end of a chain or piece of string. The hut was built on virgin soil, and therefore if any object was found buried it was most probably buried by one of the boys who inhabited the hut. Neither my brother nor myself can recall ever having seen the object before. The other two boys, Percy Paternoster and Walter Valentine, who used to sit in the hut, can remember nothing about it. There seems, therefore, at least a possibility that it was put there by Frank as stated in the séance. The surface of the lead showed evidence of severe oxidiza-

tion, but I could see no signs of iron rust near the hole where a chain might once have been and have rusted away. The disc could not properly be described as a medal, but might perhaps be called a medallion.

C. W. SOAL.

A consideration of the statement of my brother, Mr. C. W. Soal, argues at least a fair possibility that my brother Frank buried something in the hut, and that this interment was known only to himself. It is important to note that the object was found in the position indicated at the séance. In addition, we have the important statement that it was "heavy," while the object found was made of lead. Although no chain was found yet the hole in the disc seems to suggest the possibility of there having been a chain at some time. I have since made enquiries of several boys who knew Frank at school, but not one of them can remember having given him the medallion, or ever having seen it before. This lack of corroborative evidence that the medal was ever in Frank's possession is perhaps the chief flaw in the case.

ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT MATTERS  
UNKNOWN TO THE SITTER.

Towards the end of September I interviewed Walter Valentine, one of the boys who had known my brother intimately during the Rectory period, and asked him to think over a few striking incidents connected with my brother's life at Stambridge, of which I should be entirely ignorant. These incidents I asked him to put in the form of questions so framed that I could not myself easily guess the answer, but which nevertheless admitted of fairly definite replies. Valentine, who thoroughly understood the object of the experiment, said he thought it would be difficult to frame such questions for the reason that I myself knew most of what Frank had done at Stambridge. He promised, however, to think the matter over in his spare time, and when I visited him in about a week's time he had made three or four such questions.

I regret to say that I did not ask him to enclose them in an envelope to be opened only at the séance, but copied them at his dictation into my pocket book. There was therefore the possibility of rapport being established in the interval preceding the séance between Valentine's mind and my own. Very little is, I think, known about the conditions under which spontaneous telepathy operates from A to B via a third person C. One or two cases, however, have I believe been recorded which seem to indicate that this kind of transference may sometimes occur. The questions propounded by Valentine read as follows :

1. What did we have to eat on the day when you and me and Pat walked from Fambridge Ferry to Creeksea Ferry ?
2. When you and I went to bathe at the Mill one day what happened to our boots ?
3. One day when you and me and Pat were sitting in the hut I did something that made Pat very angry, what was it ?

I put the first and last of these questions at Sitting No. 7 on October 5, after the incident of the "Christmas Present." I said to Frank :

- S. Frank, Walter has made some test questions of which I don't know the answer. I want you to do your best to get the answer through.
- F. All right Sam, fire ahead.
- S. The first question is this, "When you and Walter and Pat walked from Fambridge Ferry to Creeksea Ferry, what did you have to eat on that day ?" Take your time to answer. Do you know the time I am talking about ?
- F. Remember it very well, Sam. Were tired to death.
- S. Now do you remember what you had to eat ?
- F. Sam—Samfer—samfer—samphire.
- S. Samphire is that the answer to the question ?
- F. Think that's the right answer, Sam, but there was something else.
- S. Something that you had to eat ?

F. Something to eat—it was in a field—inarticulate.

[*Note.*—At the words “in a field” I immediately thought of turnips. S. G. S.]

F. In a field—s—s—sw—sweet—sweet—swede.

S. Say that word again, Frank.

F. Think it was swedes, Sam.

S. Then samphire and swedes are the answers?

F. Try samphire and swedes.

(Pause.)

S. Now, Frank, I am going to put you another question.

S. You and Pat and Walter were sitting in the hut one day and Walter did something that made Pat very angry.

What was it?

F. Walter ran away—inarticulate.

S. What did Walter do to make Pat angry?

F. It's very difficult Sam, I can't get it.

(Pause.)

F. It might be when Pat was sitting over the fire and—

(Pause.)

S. Yes, Pat was sitting over the fire and what then?

F. Walter knocked the tin of water on the fire.

F. Pat was mad.

S. Is that the answer?

F. That may be what he means.

On the evening of Friday, October 28, 1921, I rode over to Great Stambridge to interview Valentine with regard to the tests. To avoid the risk of his memory being influenced by my answers I asked him to go into his cottage and write the correct answers on separate pieces of paper, while I wrote the answers obtained at the sitting on other pieces of paper. I was first to show my answers to Valentine, and if they were reasonably correct he was to show me his corresponding answers. If, however, my answer was hopelessly wrong or inadequate, he was to keep his own answer so as not to spoil the test for a second sitting. I first showed Valentine the paper on which I had written “samphire and swedes.” Valentine produced his piece of paper on which was written, “we ate swedes.” I asked him about the samphire, but

he said he was quite sure that none of them ate samphire on that day.

I then showed Valentine the second answer which read "Walter ran away—Pat was sitting over the fire and Walter knocked the tin of water on the fire. Pat was mad."

Walter Valentine said that the phrase, "Walter ran away," was quite relevant, but that the rest of the answer about the tin of water was altogether wrong. He did not show me his paper in this case, but suggested that I should try again. I did try at a subsequent sitting, but no intelligent answer was obtained.<sup>1</sup>

[*Note.*—It will be seen that a success was scored with the word "swedes." Had I not heard Frank say, "in a field," my conscious mind I feel sure would not have suggested "turnips," in fact, what I was thinking of was "winkles," or some sort of shell fish, since I knew this walk was on the sea wall. The answer "samphire" although definitely wrong is very interesting. From the way in which the question was put Mrs. Cooper or her subconscious mind could scarcely have guessed that the walk was by the side of a tidal river on whose saltings the glasswort (locally called samphire) blooms in profusion during the month of September. I, however, was quite familiar with the plant from which a sort of pickle can be made and the stems of which even in the raw state are not unpalatable. I had sometimes during my rambles on the Essex marshes nibbled at the green stems; they were salty but not disagreeable. Samphire, however, does not suggest edibility to the majority of people, and I very much doubt if Mrs. Cooper even knew that it grew in Essex.]

The question as to whether the boys could have eaten glasswort on this journey, I have settled definitely in the negative. The excursion took place on a Good Friday (this is confirmed by several people, including my mother), and at this time of year the glasswort has not begun to thrust its shoots through the mud; at anyrate they are

<sup>1</sup> For the real answer to Valentine's question and additional notes see Appendix [A].

just beginning to appear and could not be eaten. The getting of the word "sapphire" suggests therefore either transference from my own mind or the emergence of an associated memory in the mind of the communicator.

The answer given to the second question even although it may be wrong as a reply to the question certainly suggests supernormal knowledge—possibly of a telepathic nature. Mrs. Cooper could not possibly know by any normal means that a tin of water was always kept in the hut for the express purpose of extinguishing the fire when we left at night. The incident described was just the sort of prank that a mischievous boy like Walter would be likely to play on another boy seated over the fire. Having emptied the tin he would then naturally run away to escape the wrath of his victim. The incident may actually have happened, or, on the other hand, it may have been a pure invention of my own subconscious mind. It is not the sort of thing that Mrs. Cooper herself could have invented; it reveals too intimate a knowledge of conditions at the hut.

For Valentine's corroboration of these tests see Appendix A.

The third test about the boots when put at a subsequent sitting elicited no intelligent answer. It will be seen therefore that one definite success was scored in the series of tests.

#### UNVERIFIED INCIDENTS WHICH SHOW SUPERNORMAL KNOWLEDGE.

It will be observed that almost all the preceding incidents refer to a particular period of my brother's life, namely the years when we lived at Little Stambidge Rectory, and during which I was most closely associated with him. From the year 1915 onwards I saw much less of him for I was away on my Army service. After the thirteenth sitting I encouraged him to speak of things connected with this later period of his life, as I thought that such incidents would afford a greater chance for the exclusion of direct telepathy from myself. From time

to time Frank attempted to speak of matters connected with his life in the Army, but unfortunately the incidents he selected were such as were almost impossible to verify. But though it seemed absolutely impossible to prove his statements they were from a psychological standpoint very interesting as the setting of the incidents invariably showed supernormal knowledge. The statements made were true as far as the sitter knew anything about them, but the main incidents although plausible could not be checked.

A typical example occurs in Sitting No. 16, held on Thursday, December 1. At this sitting Mr. A. L. Gregson was present.

(Frank spoke first and related the following story :)

- F. Sam, I'm trying to give you something about when I was in the Army.
- S. Good, that's just what I want.
- F. Sam, it was when we were in Kent. We all had bicycles.
- F. Two of us went—inarticulate.
- S. Two of you went—I didn't get that, Frank.
- F. Two rode ahead for scouts.
- S. I think I've got that. Two of you rode ahead for scouts.
- F. I was one of them, Sam.
- S. Then what happened ?
- F. We stopped near a—inarticulate.
- S. Try and get that, Frank. You say you stopped somewhere.
- F. Stopped near a thatched house.
- S. What then ?
- F. There was an old woman—gave us apples.
- S. Yes I've got that. Go on.
- F. Gave us lots of apples—filled our pockets—it was hard to ride, Sam—I mean for the apples.
- S. Would you remember the name of this village ?
- F. Didn't notice, Sam. Wasn't a village.
- S. Well would you remember whereabouts in Kent it was ?
- F. Mid—middle—orchards—pause.

(After a pause Frank refers again to the matter.)

- F. The old woman said something, Sam.
- S. Yes, what did she say ?

F. About "I have a boy—

S. Yes, I have a boy—

F. I have a boy just like you.

S. Is that what she said?

F. Yes, Sam. If you could find out about it.

S. It would be very hard unless we knew the name of the place.

F. In Kent, Sam—when we were—

S. Where were you going then?

F. A great time, Sam.

S. But where were you going?

F. Right to the C—C—

S. Where.

F. Right through to the—we saw the sea at the end—it was over the d—downs.

S. Did you get right to the sea?

F. Right there, Sam.

(The voice ceases and lights appear. At the end of the sitting when John Ferguson had gone I questioned Frank again about it, but could get no additional information.)

Now the medium could hardly have known that my brother had belonged to a Bicycle Section whose Headquarters were at Sevenoaks in Kent. The fact that Frank's Battalion rode on manœuvres through Kent to the Sussex Coast was known to me since it was mentioned in one of his letters to my mother. These manœuvres appear to have lasted a week or two, and my brother in his letter mentions such things as "passing through Groombridge," "fighting all the way," carrying "pack 90 lbs." with bicycle 60 lbs. up a three miles' hill on the first day's journey from Sevenoaks. As the letter is dated September 8, 1917, the time certainly corresponds with "apple time." There is, however, in this letter no mention of his being sent on scouting operations or of any old woman who gave him apples. Nor is there any definite mention of a sight of the sea in this letter although I have some hazy recollection that when my brother visited me in Maida Vale hospital one day at the

end of September 1917, he mentioned catching a glimpse of the sea from the Downs. I have also a distinct recollection that he told me on that occasion that they had ridden 80 miles and that he mentioned Lewes. It is one of those tantalising problems which we shall probably never solve. Have we here a superstructure of fabrication reared upon fragments of knowledge obtained supernormally from the mind of the sitter? Or was my brother detailing an incident which actually occurred? The next section of our paper will perhaps throw some light on this question of fabrication. A similar series of unverifiable incidents were given by my brother in connection with his electrical career, but it is perhaps scarcely necessary to describe them. The best that can be said for them is that they appear plausible and show a knowledge of matters which the medium could not possibly have obtained in any fraudulent way.

Other cases similar to this in connection with electricity were obtained, but the one described above should suffice.

I have been asked the question, "Did your brother ever profess to remember an incident which turned out to be definitely false—not merely unverifiable?" I would reply that in the case of incidents spontaneously volunteered by Frank I can find no intelligible story which proved to be definitely false. There is, it is true, one case in which Frank talked about "a letter" "sent to the old house" "after you left"—"you did not get it." But the wording is so very vague that some doubt might be felt about the meaning. Though I tried to clear the matter up by questions the story still remained incoherent. If, as I suppose, it refers to a letter being addressed to us at Little Stambidge Rectory after we had moved to Prittlewell, I think it highly improbable that we should not have received it since the P.O. would certainly forward it.

He also stated in a sitting that "a great friend of his, M—, had put a green wreath on his grave." It seems highly improbable that he ever had such a friend who would put a wreath on his grave. We cannot imagine who it can be.

I have records of two or three questions I put to him to which he returned definitely false answers. Often it seemed as if he (or the medium) were merely guessing. Thus on one occasion I asked the question, "Where did Pat hide his money?" This referred to an incident that Frank, if living, would certainly not have forgotten. The answer I hoped for was "In a hollow willow tree where we found his hoard one day." Frank, however, merely muttered, "In Drawer—Drawer," and then lapsed into silence when told that the answer was wrong. It is safe to say that no spontaneous incident of the same importance as say "The Starbobs" incident was ever given which proved to be false.

On three occasions Frank gave book-tests, but only one of these appeared to be a success. The successful one (if not due to chance coincidence) is rather remarkable and is recorded in *Psychic Science* [April 1923].

Frank gave no descriptions of his life in the other world—perhaps for the reason that I never encouraged this kind of message. On one occasion he uttered a few sentences about "the beautiful summerland," but I must confess I thought at the time that both the voice and the views sounded very like Mrs. Cooper. Frank once purported to give a description of how he was wounded on the battlefield.

"Such a big flash, Sam—such a big flash. They found me lying—I saw a beautiful mist all round me—the first thing I thought of was 'Mother.' We were going over the top—"

There is nothing in this description that I have been able either to verify or to disprove, but I well remember that at this particular sitting the atmosphere seemed charged with emotion and I had a strong impression at that moment that I was really in touch with my brother.

## SECTION 2.

### *The Study of a Fictitious Communicator.*

The chief interest in the following case lies in the fact, that by means of a quasi-experimental method we are

able to watch the mental interplay which goes on between the minds of the sitter and the medium. I do not mean to suggest that there is anything *transferred* from the mind of the sitter to the mind of the medium, but merely state that there is a causal nexus between the working of the two minds; of the fundamental nature of the process I know nothing. I use the term "transference" merely on account of its convenience and not as implying any theory of what is observed to happen. The case of John Ferguson seems, however, to suggest some of the conditions to be observed when carrying out similar experiments. The stories about the communicator which the sitter suggests to his subconscious mind should in the first instance be plausible and not such as would conflict with the statements given by the communicator at the previous sittings. The arguments on which the sitter bases his conjectures of what is to transpire may be quite unsound from a logical point of view; what seems important is that they should be psychologically suggestive. In other words the sitter must be able to convince the irrational side of his mind that the arguments he employs for arriving at his conclusions are plausible, and that his absurd conjectures have at least a sporting chance of coming true. It is necessary, in fact, that the ideas which he wishes to transfer to the medium should in the first place have become active in his own subconsciousness, for there is some evidence to show that it is those ideas which are coloured by an emotional tone which have the best chance of becoming externalised by automatism. In my own case I actually came to half believe the things I had supposed about John Ferguson, and had a sort of desperate hope that they might turn out to be facts after all. At the same time the logical, reasoning part of my mind told me that my arguments were childish and absurd. I was able to establish beyond reasonable doubt that John Ferguson was a pure fiction—a personality built around certain scenes and events connected with my own thoughts and environments.

The case of John Ferguson, which extended over ten sittings, shows throughout a curious consistency, not

uncommon in such fictitious cases, which was kept up till the fiction was finally exploded at the end. Thus it will be observed that John Ferguson never got mixed in his dates, age, etc., but would repeat in Sitting 19 what he had said in Sitting 11. He would invent new scenes and happenings to cope with new facts discovered by the sitter.

The case may be said to have opened at Sitting No. 11, when the mention of Brentwood first occurs. *John Ferguson* himself, however, did not communicate directly until the next sitting. I will first quote the record of Sitting No. 11.

*Sitting No. 11.*

*Thursday, November 3, 6 p.m.* Present: MRS. COOPER.  
DR. A. C. DUNSTAN.  
S. G. SOAL.

(This was a very poor sitting. Both the sitters and the medium complained of being cold. Until the end of the sitting the voices were feeble and indistinct, little of any interest being said. Towards the close of the sitting Nada speaks :)

NADA. There's someone wishes to speak—Wescot Road—Brentwood.

S. What was the name of the road ?

NADA. Wescot Road, Brentwood.

[*Note.*—Dr. Dunstan said, "I think it said Wesgate Road." I however distinctly noticed that the last syllable was "cot," and said so at the time. S. G. S.]

S. Who is it speaking ?

NADA. Think it's a man and a child.

S. Can you give their names ?

NADA. Difficult because he's not strong enough to speak.  
Think it's a father and daughter.

S. Are you sure of Wescot Road ?

NADA. Quite sure—Wescot Road, Brentwood.

(Pause.)

AFID. Power is going.

I arranged to have the next sitting on the following Saturday morning as I did not think it would be advisable

to wait so long as a week. No enquiries were made about Brentwood or Wescot Road. I should mention here that Brentwood is an old world market town about 18 miles from London on the Great Eastern Railway, and enjoys the distinction of possessing both a Grammar School and a Lunatic Asylum. In my journeys to town I had passed through the station for many years, but had never visited the town. Nor to the best of my knowledge had I ever consulted a directory of Brentwood.

We will now proceed to the next sitting.

*Sitting No. 12.*

Saturday, November 5, 11 a.m.

Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(Nada spoke first.)

NADA. Pleased to see you, Mr. Soal.

S. Pleased to see you, Nada. Are you going to bring the man from Brentwood.

NADA. He's going to try to give his name.

(Pause, during which Nada was heard to whisper aside as if addressing an unseen communicator—"Now don't forget. There are two houses. Two quite different houses.")

A rather deep, but not unpleasant voice said briskly:

VOICE. I am John Ferguson—brother's name is Jim—Brentwood—I want to describe a house—in an avenue—trees on each side all big houses with gates painted dark red—quite large houses.

S. Where is this avenue?

J. F. Brent.

S. Brentwood?

J. F. Yes, in Brentwood.

S. What is the name of the avenue?

J. F. H—H—can't get it, but it begins with H. It's a large house. People there very musical. Keep fowls. I was 33 when I passed over—Jim is my brother.

S. Does your brother Jim live at this house?

J. F. Must enquire there—find out about Jim.

S. Can't you give the name of the street ?

J. F. Not now it's gone from me.

NADA. You mustn't press him so. You must give him time to breathe.

S. Very well, Nada. But has this house anything to do with Wescot Road ?

NADA. Yes, there's a connection between the two families.

S. What is the connection ?

NADA. Can't say. He isn't strong enough to tell much yet.  
(Pause.)

(FRANK speaking) Sam, I'm glad to see you.

S. Frank, do you know anything about this man Ferguson ?

F. Only what I heard Nada say.

S. What did you hear Nada say ?

F. About a large house at Brentwood and red gates. I was interested, Sam, because I remember Brent.

S. What can you remember about Brentwood ?

F. First time—first I ever slept from home.

S. Quite right. When was that ?

F. The Army—joined there.

S. Good, do you remember anything else about it ?

F. Only that I didn't like it, Sam—not there long.

[*Note.*—Frank joined the Essex Yeomanry at Brentwood (Warley Barracks) in 1916. Stayed there a night or two and was sent on to Colchester.]

NADA. There isn't much power left. He'll try to tell more next time.

F. Must say goodbye, Sam.

S. Goodbye, Frank.

AFID. Power is going.

*Sitting No. 13.*

*Thursday, November 10, 3.30 p.m.*

*Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(For the first part of the sitting Frank communicated incidents of his own life and after he had finished Nada spoke :)

NADA. John Ferguson's here. He'll try to speak, but he isn't very strong.

- S. Let him do his best.  
(I now heard the same voice as at the previous sitting.)
- J. F. John Ferguson sends his love to brother Jim and his wife. Give my message.
- S. I will gladly do that if you will tell me where your brother Jim lives.
- J. F. You must enquire at the avenue H—H—it won't come to me.
- S. That doesn't help me much.
- J. F. Wish I could get it—it's a large house—stands in grounds not joined up—all large houses just there.
- NADA whispers. Think there's trellis work at the back in the garden.
- S. Never mind about that. When did John Ferguson die?
- NADA whispers. Surely you can tell him that. When did you pass over?
- J. F. Think it was in 1912 about March.
- S. Are you sure of that date?
- J. F. Yes, pretty sure.
- S. How old were you when you passed over?
- J. F. I was 33 years.
- S. Where did you die?
- J. F. My mind is confused. It was in a very large town.
- S. In Brentwood?
- J. F. No not Brent, quite another place.
- S. What was your occupation?
- J. F. Machines—engin—engineer—a room with big machines—several men worked under me.
- NADA. He makes me hear sound of whirring wheels.
- S. Was this in London?
- J. F. It might be London.
- S. Were you married?
- J. F. Yes, married, but she passed over before me. One daughter Amy and she's dead.
- S. How old was Amy?
- J. F. Amy was just a child—Amy buried—same grave as her father.
- NADA. Think there's a large cross at the head of the grave.
- S. How do you know that?
- NADA. Because he makes me see it.

S. Well, can you see what it says on the cross ?

NADA. I'll try to see. It's John Ferguson, died 3rd March, 1912, aged 33 years. There's something else, but I can't see it.

S. Where is this grave ?

NADA. Don't know—I just see the grave. Trying to make him tell me—it's a very large cemetery. Thousands of white stones.

(Pause.)

(After this Frank communicates upon a different subject.)

Sitting No. 14.

Thursday, November 17, 3.40 p.m.

Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(Frank communicates for a while and during a pause I ask :)

S. Nada, is John Ferguson coming to-day ?

NADA. We're waiting for him to come.

(Short interval.)

J. F. Good afternoon, it's John Ferguson speaking—I wasn't ill long, it was pneumonia after falling into the water—while we were fishing—boat upset.

S. What happened then ?

J. F. Jim and I got ashore and Jim took no harm. I caught my death.

S. Where did this happen ?

J. F. The boat was not far from the—not far from the shore.

S. Was it at the seaside ?

J. F. No, not at seaside but near the sea—a large river—we went on a week-end.

S. Can't you tell me the name of the place ?

J. F. Sorry, names have all gone.

S. Is Jim younger than you or older ?

J. F. Much younger by ten years.

S. What is Jim's occupation ?

J. F. Jim was—inarticulate.

S. Can't hear. What was Jim's occupation ?

J. F. Jim was a bit of a scholar—but he gave it up and joined me.

- S. What did he join you in ?
- J. F. With the machines—mo—mo—motors.
- S. Where is brother Jim living now ?
- J. F. Sorry I can't get that. I only remember an avenue and the big house.
- NADA. Believe there's a large picture in the drawing room with eyes that seem to look all round the room—lots of cats at this house.
- S. Do you mean the house at Brentwood ?
- NADA. Yes, Brent.
- S. Had this house at Brentwood any name or had it a number ?
- J. F. It had a name, but forget it.
- S. Try to think of the name.
- J. F. Makes many efforts to pronounce words but nothing articulate is given.
- NADA. It's no use pressing him any more to-day. He isn't clear. Perhaps he'll be clearer next time.

(No more from John Ferguson at this sitting.)

[Note.—It was between this sitting and the next that I recalled having known a boy named James Ferguson who had once attended the Southend-on-Sea High School at the same time as myself. I made his acquaintance in the year 1902, at a time when we should be both about 12 or 13 years old. I distinctly recollect his telling me that his father was an Army Instructor or kind of schoolmaster at the R.G.A. Station at Shoeburyness. He also mentioned having been at Gibraltar when his father was serving there. Our acquaintance was slight and confined entirely to school hours. I never visited his home, and knew really very little about him. I have a hazy recollection that he intended to follow in his father's footsteps and become an Army Schoolmaster. He must have left the school in about 1904, possibly on account of his father being transferred to another garrison. Be that as it may, I lost sight of him after my first year at Southend High School and have heard nothing of him since. I did not know he had a brother—at least I cannot remember his

ever having mentioned it. At this stage I formed in my mind the first of a series of purely fanciful conjectures about the communicator John Ferguson. I amused myself with the following absurd arguments.

1. J. F. said he died in 1912 at the age of 33. His brother Jim would therefore be about 13 in the year 1902, since J. F. had said that Jim was ten years younger than himself. In 1902 the James Ferguson I knew would be about 13.
2. J. F. said his brother was a bit of a scholar. This would probably mean that Jim attended the High School while John had had no such advantages. Quite possibly, therefore, Jim went in for Army teaching but finding something more lucrative gave it up for engineering. Of course, needless to say, I knew these arguments to be absurd, but I hoped vaguely that "there might be something in it." I was, however, very surprised to see the effect of these imaginings upon the next sitting, No. 15.]

*Sitting No. 15.*

*Thursday, November 24, 3.30 p.m.*

*Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

(John Ferguson appeared quite early in the sitting. It was Nada who spoke first.)

NADA. Good afternoon. John is so anxious his brother should know he is still alive.

S. I shall be able to tell him if I knew where Jim lived.

NADA. He's going to try to tell you, but he finds names so difficult. He's awfully worried because he can't remember things.

S. Well you must try to help him, Nada.

NADA. We're doing all we can.

(Pause.)

J. F. speaks. Good afternoon. I want to tell you this. My father—my father—

S. What about your father. Is he still alive?

J. F. No, has passed over. I want to tell you this. He had to do with the Army.

- S. Was he a soldier ?
- J. F. Not exactly a soldier—was with soldiers a lot—he used to help them.
- NADA interposing. He makes Nada frightened Boom—Boom—he makes a noise like big guns—the noise would break all the windows—Nada wouldn't like it. Big guns in the sea.
- S. I quite understand all that, Nada, but what had John's father to do with soldiers ?
- J. F. speaking. Used to—to—inarticulate.—Maps lots of maps—he read the maps with the prism compass—he used to—inarticulate. Can't get it, perhaps you will guess what I mean—helping the soldiers.
- S. Never mind, you've said enough about it. Had Jim anything to do with the Army ?
- J. F. A bit—he helped father with the maps and compass.—Soon gave it up—not enough go for him.
- S. What did Jim do then ?
- J. F. I got him work with me.
- S. Is Jim still in the same place ?
- J. F. Same work—not same firm.
- S. What sort of work ?
- J. F. Mo—m—motors.
- (Pause.)
- S. Ask John Ferguson, Nada, if Jim ever knew me.
- NADA. I'll ask him that. (Nada is heard to whisper aside).
- NADA. He's not strong now, but he says "school." He means Jim, not himself. Says Jim mentioned you at home—something about "always top of the year—all the prizes"—I don't know what he means.
- S. Does he tell you anything else ?
- J. F. Think that's all I know about you.

(Pause, after which Frank communicates.)

[Note.—This sitting is a remarkable illustration of spontaneous telepathy from sitter to medium. The mention of the guns breaking the windows most clearly recalls Shoeburyness, where many windows are broken every year. Then again the mention of the maps and prism compass vividly recalls the duties of an Army schoolmaster in an Artillery School.]

The prism compass is, of course, the prismatic compass used for finding bearings of distant objects. As a person who once instructed cadets in Artillery work I was quite familiar with the prismatic compass, but could Mrs. Cooper even have heard of it? We see the idea which I had formed before the sitting clothing itself in imagery. Again the phrases "always top of year" and "all the prizes," are clear evidence of telepathy from myself. At Southend High School we did not speak of forms in those days, but of "years." James Ferguson and I were at school together in our first year. I was the top of this year and top of every terminal examination also. The phrase "all the prizes" also obviously refers to myself, since at the end of my first year at Southend I took first prizes for mathematics, English, physics and chemistry. Clearly what was intended to be conveyed was the fact (obtained telepathically from myself) that Jim Ferguson had brought home to his brother news of my successes.]

#### FIRST VISIT TO BRENTWOOD.

On Monday, November 28, I visited Brentwood for the first time in my life, although I had frequently passed through it on the railway. My object was not to settle the question of John Ferguson's identity but to glean a few facts about the locality and watch what effect it would have on the next sitting. I alighted at the railway station, walked down the High Street, and presently met some Grammar School boys in their red caps. Entering into conversation with the boys I asked if there was a street in Brentwood called "Wescot Road." "Oh yes, sir," one answered, "there is a Warecott Road. It is a good walk from here and lies off the Ongar Road." "How do you spell it?" I asked. "It is spelled Warecott, but we say it like Waiscoat or Wescut." "I will give you a riddle," said I, "it is to find a street in Brentwood consisting only of large houses with red gates which has an avenue of trees and whose name

begins with H." The boys thought a while and at last one of them answered, "It could only be Highland Avenue." And checking off the points one by one they all presently agreed that Highland Avenue was the only street that would fit the description. "And where does Highland Avenue lay." I asked. "It is off the Ongar Road a good mile from here, and Warescott Road is not far from Highland Avenue." Bidding the boys adieu, I set out for Highland Avenue, which I reached after a quarter of an hour's hard walking. It is a comparatively new road running at right angles to the Ongar Road and contains perhaps not more than a dozen large houses each standing majestically in its own grounds. The gates were all nicely painted of a dark red colour, and on each side of the street was a row of young trees. It certainly seemed to answer John Ferguson's description. I did not, however, enquire whether anyone lived there of the name of Ferguson, but walked a few hundred yards down the hill to view Warescott Road. I found a short street of about thirty-two houses, obviously the homes of the artisan classes of the town. The houses were not detached, but built into two long blocks on each side of the street. "What a contrast," thought I, "this street presents in comparison with the spacious opulence of Highland Avenue." What conceivable connection could there be between families living in such different environments? So musing I made my way back to the railway station.

Sitting No. 16.

December 1.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER.

MR. A. L. GREGSON, B.Sc.

S. G. SOAL.

(During the first part of the sitting Frank communicates and then after a pause John Ferguson began to speak.)

J. F. It's all coming back to me about Brentwood.

NADA. He's so excited because his memory is coming back.

J. F. The house is near the—

NADA. Now don't get out of breath.

- J. F. The house is near—near the Ong—Ong—Onget Road.  
S. Say that name again.  
J. F. The Onget Road.  
S. What is the name of the avenue ?  
J. F. H—H—H—I nearly got it. It's near the Onget Road.  
S. Well, never mind. Perhaps it will come to you presently.  
Try to tell me the name of the house.  
J. F. Inarticulate.  
NADA. He says there's two funny gas lamps at top of Wescot Road.  
[*Note.*—I had noticed two rather curious globes on my visit.]  
S. Never mind that, Nada. Don't give me gas, give me the name of the street.  
NADA. Don't be so impatient. He's doing the best he can, it's very difficult.  
J. F. High—High—Highlands—I've got it at last.  
S. Is that the name of the house ?  
J. F. Name of Avenue.  
S. Where is the house ?  
J. F. House is Onget end of Avenue.  
S. Good, in which side of the Avenue is it ?  
J. F. Left—left side from Onget end.  
S. How many houses from the end, one, two, three, four ?  
J. F. (Inarticulate.)  
S. Is it the very end house ?  
J. F. Not the end house—not more than four or five from the end.  
S. Well, tell me what connection there is between the family in Highland Avenue and the family in Warecott Road.  
J. F. Enquire for Ethel—Ethel is the link.  
NADA. He says Ethel connects it up.  
S. Ethel who ?  
J. F. Ethel (inarticulate).  
S. Was Ethel a relative ?  
J. F. No. Ethel is a young person in Warecott Road.  
NADA. There isn't much power left.

(Frank comes to say goodbye.)

[*Note.*—At the end of sitting Mr. A. L. Gregson, B.Sc., corroborated the word "Highland" given by the voice.]

[*Note.*—The day after the previous sitting I made another imaginative conjecture. I asked myself "What connection can there be between Ethel who lives in Warecott Road and the well-to-do-people who live in Highland Avenue. They could hardly be poor relatives. "I have it," I said, "Ethel is a trusted servant of the house in Highland Avenue. Her people, however, live in Warecott Road." We shall see how this idea is worked out in Sitting No. 17.]

*Sitting No. 17.*

December 8, 1921, 3.30 p.m.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(Frank communicates for the first part of the sitting and after this came an interval during which lights were shown. After the interval J. F. speaks:)

J. F. Pleased to see you.

S. Good afternoon, are you John Ferguson?

J. F. John Ferguson.

S. Can you tell me anything more about Ethel?

J. F. Ethel Lloyd, she was the young person in Warecott Road.

S. But who was she?

J. F. Maid to the family in Highlands—went there to help every day. She didn't live at Highlands.

S. Why did you mention Ethel at all?

J. F. Someone here wanted to send message to her.

S. Who was this?

J. F. Think it's her mother, but she is hard to get at.

S. Can't she come to speak herself?

J. F. Not strong enough.

NADA (interposing). Think she died of cancer.

S. Is she Ethel's mother?

NADA. We think so, but we're not sure.

(Pause.)

S. John Ferguson, can you tell me the name of the house in Highland Avenue?

J. F. Inarticulate—It's quite near the Onget Road, on the left hand.

S. Is Ethel Lloyd living in Brentwood now ?

J. F. Was before War.

S. But is she there now ?

J. F. Can't say—out of touch.

S. What was the number of the house in Warescott Road where Ethel Lloyd lived ?

J. F. Have forgotten—Ethel was well liked at Highlands.

NADA. There isn't much power to-day. Perhaps he'll tell you more next time.

(Frank speaks for a few moments and the sitting concludes.)

#### SECOND VISIT TO BRENTWOOD.

On the evening of Monday, December 12, 1921, I visited Brentwood for the second time and interviewed Mr. Symonds the Postmaster, who at my request consulted the directories and informed me that there was no person of the name of Ferguson at present on the Postal Register. He further informed me that he himself lived in Highland Avenue, and had lived there since before 1913. He had never heard of the name of Ferguson in connection with anyone in Highland Avenue. With the exception of one house called "Paglesham," all the houses had retained their original owners since 1913. A certain Captain Shoemsmith,<sup>1</sup> who had been living in "Paglesham" in the year 1913, had quite recently left the district and the house was now empty. Mr. Symonds did not inform me where Captain Shoemsmith had gone. On this point I am positive since I made notes in my pocket-book at the time. While I was conversing with Mr. Symonds, there came into the Post Office a postman whose round had included Warescott Road for a great many years. This man told me that no people of the name of Lloyd lived in Warescott Road at the present time. Some seventeen years ago, however, he remembered a "very dirty old woman," called Mrs. Lloyd, who had lived in one of the houses, but this woman had left some sixteen years ago. He could not recall her initials, but thought the number of

<sup>1</sup>Pseudonym.

the house at which she lived was 16. As the communicator had described "Ethel" as a "young person," who presumably lived in Warecott Road somewhere about the year 1912, this clue seemed scarcely worth following up. I next visited Warecott Road and learned from a resident that no "young person called Ethel" was living there at present.

I next visited Mr. Cottee of 11 Rose Valley, the Registrar of Births and Deaths, and was informed by him that no directory of Brentwood had been published since 1913, owing to the War. On consulting a 1913 Directory, I verified that no Ferguson was living in Highland Avenue in 1913, and no Lloyd in Warecott Road at that time. Captain Shoesmith, R.N.R., was, however, living at "Paglesham," as stated by Mr. Symonds. Reference to old directories showed that no Ferguson had lived in Brentwood for many years before 1912. On leaving Mr. Cottee, I walked over to Highland Avenue and noted that "Paglesham" was the third house on the left from the Ongar Road. I then returned home.

[*Note.*—Between the date of the above visit and the next sitting, which was held two days later, I invented more theories around the enigmatical personality of John Ferguson. I thought of Captain Shoesmith, R.N.R., who had just left Highland Avenue for a destination unknown. The tenor of my argument ran as follows:

1. Captain Shoesmith was a naval man.

2. The Navy is in close co-operation with the Coast Defence Artillery. What more natural than the idea that John Ferguson's father should have met Captain Shoesmith at Shoeburyness. The fathers became friends and consequently the sons of Ferguson became friends with the sons of Shoesmith. Hence we have an explanation of John Ferguson's request for us to "enquire at Highlands about Jim." These conjectures the communicator most obligingly confirmed at the next sitting.]

*Sitting No. 18.*

December 14, 3.30 p.m.

Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(Nada spoke first :)

NADA. Pleased to see you, Mr. Soal.

S. Good afternoon, Nada. I want most especially to speak to John Ferguson to-day. It's very important.

NADA. I'm going off to bring him.

(Interval of a few minutes.)

VOICE OF J. F. Glad to see you again.

S. Good afternoon. Are you John Ferguson ?

J. F. Yes, John Ferguson speaking.

S. Then listen, John Ferguson. I've just been to Brentwood and have found out that neither you nor your brother ever lived there. What do you say to that ?

J. F. Pardon me, I did not say we lived there. We had friends there.

S. I understood that your brother Jim lived there.

J. F. Oh no, we motored to Highlands weekends from town—they were very musical. Jim played the violin and I the 'cello.

S. What year was that ?

J. F. About 1911 or so.

S. Then why on earth did you spend all this time talking about a place where you never lived ?

J. F. We had to do it. Brent was the link with yourself. Jim was another link.

S. But I had never been to Brentwood.

J. F. No, but you had some connection with it. Often went through it.

[Note.—At the end of the first sitting I mentioned to Mrs. Cooper that I often travelled through Brentwood.]

S. Well, try to tell me the house of your friends in Highland Avenue.

J. F. Can tell you now—you've made fresh links.

J. F. Think it was third house from Onget Road.

S. And what was the name of your friends ?

J. F. They were friends of my father's—N—N—

- S. Does the name begin with N ?
- J. F. Na—Na—Naval—friend of my father.
- S. Say that again.
- J. F. He was Naval man—Sh—[Shoeshine]<sup>1</sup>—think that was his name.
- S. You're nearly right—say it again.
- J. F. Sh—Shoeshine.
- NADA. Shoeshine ; it sounds a funny name.
- S. It's near enough.
- S. Now tell me the name of Shoeshine's house.
- J. F. It's where cowslips grow in cock—
- S. What was that last word ?
- NADA. Cowslips grow in cockle beds—think it's something you would know.
- S. That's very good indeed.
- J. F. Do you believe in me now ?
- S. You seem to know a great deal.
- NADA. Frank's laughing about this.
- F. Sam, I heard that. We've been where they are.
- S. What do you mean Frank ?
- [Note.—I had guessed his meaning.]
- F. There were cockles but no cowslips, Sam.
- S. Quite right, Frank, I understand.
- F. Not even cockles, Sam, only empty shells. Do you understand.
- S. I guess what you mean.
- F. We saw them, Sam, and on the way we passed a mon—monk—it was a tree, you know—riddle of a tree—do you know now ?
- S. That's very good indeed. I know perfectly.
- NADA. He must have a rest after giving these splendid tests.  
(There is a pause during which lights appear.)  
[Note.—This complicated series of allusions merits a special study. In the first place the phrase "where cowslips grow in cockle beds" is a most ingenious method of introducing the name "Paglesham," which it will be remembered was the name of Captain Shoemsmith's residence at Brentwood. Now Paglesham

<sup>1</sup> It has been necessary to alter the name given at the sitting to correspond with the pseudonym given above on p. 537.

is the name of a small hamlet on the Essex coast situated about four miles from Little Stambridge Rectory. Frank and I visited this place several times. It is noted for its cockle and oyster beds. Moreover the word 'Paglesham' (Ham of the Paigles) is Anglo-Saxon for "cowslip meadow."<sup>1</sup> This derivation was, of course, known to both Frank and myself, but I could hardly imagine that Mrs. Cooper could have known even the place, let alone the derivation. The next phrase "cockles but no cowslips" clearly refers to our own visits to Paglesham, on which occasions we could always discover the cockles but never the cowslips. The succeeding statement "not even cockles, Sam, only empty shells," is once more an allusion to the visits which my brother and I made to Paglesham. Walking along the sea wall by the side of the creeks, we often came across shallow rectangular tanks of concrete full of sea water, and the bottoms of these tanks were inches deep in cockle shells. But all the shells were empty and never a cockle could be seen. The reference to "a riddle of a tree" and "mon" also clearly shows supernormal knowledge. On our walks to Paglesham we passed a house which had on its lawn a well grown "Monkey Puzzle," and I distinctly recall that we always stopped to admire this tree,<sup>2</sup> which was the only specimen in the neighbourhood visible from the high road. The whole incident is probably a curious and involved example of spontaneous telepathy from the sitter.]

(To continue with Sitting No. 18.)

- NADA. After the interval. John Ferguson is here again.  
 S. Are you there, John Ferguson?  
 J. F. What else do you wish to ask.  
 S. Your friend [Shoeshine] has left Brentwood now. How can I find out where he lives?

<sup>1</sup>The etymology of the word 'paigle' is doubtful, but it is still in common use in the Eastern counties to denote cowslip.

<sup>2</sup>This tree, which is fifty years old, still stands in front of the house of Mr. Wiseman, of Buckland House, East End, Paglesham.

- J. F. Think he has gone to seaside.  
 S. To Southend-on-Sea ?  
 J. F. Not Southend. P—P—  
 S. Do you mean Portsmouth ?  
 J. F. Not that. P—P—Plym—  
 S. Plymouth, is that the name ?  
 J. F. Try Plym—  
 NADA. There isn't much power left.  
 (Pause.)  
 F. I've come to say goodbye, Sam. So glad you knew  
 about the cockles. It was a good test.  
 S. Very good. Goodbye, Frank.  
 AFID. Power is going.

*Sitting No. 19.*

*Tuesday, December 20, 1921, 3.40 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
 S. G. SOAL.*

(Frank communicates for the first part of the sitting. After him John Ferguson speaks.)

- J. F. Good afternoon. Have you found [Shine shoe] yet ?  
 S. Not yet. I haven't tried. I wish you could tell me  
 your brother Jim's address.  
 J. F. It's difficult. Think he lives in London now.  
 NADA. Believe his house has two white pillars—six steps to it.  
 S. That won't help me very much.  
 NADA. Don't be so rude. I give you what I can get.  
 J. F. Sorry can't get Jim's address. I worked in Glas—  
 Glasgow for some years. Father comes from Glasgow.  
 He was educated at Union University, Glasgow.  
 S. Union University ? I never heard of such a place.  
 J. F. You will find it's right. Union University.  
 [Note.—Union University is quite absurd, but there  
 is a building connected with Glasgow University  
 called the "Union."]  
 S. Were you educated at Union University ?  
 J. F. Not me. Father was.  
 S. How did he come to get into the Army ?  
 J. F. He left the University quite young. Didn't pass his  
 examinations. Then got job with the Army.  
 S. Were you ever at Gibraltar ?

J. F. Faintly remember it. Very small then. Father often talked of it.

S. You say you worked at Glasgow for some years. What part of Glasgow ?

J. F. Pollok Shields.

S. Say that again.

J. F. Pollok Shields.

S. Where did you die ?

J. F. Don't use that word. I've only passed to another life.

S. Well, where did you pass from ?

J. F. Glasgow Pollok Shields.

S. Then were you buried at Glasgow ?

J. F. Yes, that's right, Glasgow.

S. Was your wife buried at Glasgow ?

J. F. No, London—Kensal Rise.

J. F. Amy buried with me.

S. How old were you when you died ?

J. F. Just 33.

S. What was the date of your death ?

J. F. 3rd March.

S. What was the year ?

J. F. 1912.

S. You say the same things as you said before.

J. F. Why shouldn't I if they are true.

S. How did you die ?

J. F. Caught cold in water.

S. Where was that ?

J. F. River near Glasgow.

S. Can you give the names of any streets in Glasgow ?

J. F. Union Street—difficult. Remember two friends of my father who lived near there.—Robert Lecky and James Fraser—like two old brothers.

S. Did they live in Union Street ?

J. F. Not far away.

S. Is Robert Lecky alive now ?

J. F. Not sure. Must be old man.

S. Are you sure you were buried at Glasgow ?

J. F. Quite sure.

(Pause.)

AFID. Power is going.

[*Note.*—On December 26, 1921, I addressed a letter of enquiry to Captain Shoemith, R.N.R., "Paglesham," Highland Avenue, Brentwood, Essex, and marked the envelope "To be forwarded." In this letter I mentioned all the facts of the case, describing the object of my experiments and including a brief list of the statements of the communicator. To this I added a request that Captain Shoemith would be so kind as to throw any light possible on the subject, with the assurance that the matter would be treated as confidential. Captain Shoemith's reply to my letter did not arrive till the morning of January 9, so that I remained in suspense during the next sitting which was held on January 4. Previous to this sitting I procured a plan of Glasgow and spent a couple of hours on the evening of January 3 poring over the names of the plan. I noted the names of all the cemeteries both large and small, and observed in particular that the two large cemeteries which seemed to be nearest to the Pollok Shields district were called "the South Necropolis" and "Janefield Street." I took this map with me to Sitting No. 20 the next morning, and when the light had been switched off unfolded it and spread it on the floor in the dark. In my own mind I had decided that the name of the cemetery in which John Ferguson was buried was a toss up between South Necropolis and Janefield Street, since these seemed nearest to the district in which he resided. Here follows the record of the sitting.]

*Sitting No. 20.*

*Wednesday, January 4, 1922, 11.10 a.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.*  
[*Postponed from December 28, 1921*] S. G. SOAL.

(I did not mention to Mrs. Cooper that I had brought a map with me and when the light was extinguished I unfolded it and spread it on the floor as stated above.

Nada spoke first, and then Frank, but to my

surprise John Ferguson did not appear, but instead a most remarkable communicator, called "Gordon Davis" appeared, whose case is considered in the last section of my paper. When Gordon Davis had lost control there was an interval and at the end of this interval John Ferguson spoke.)

J. F. Pollok Shields—Pollok—is where I lived.

S. Could you tell me the name of the street ?

J. F. It's difficult.

S. I've laid a map of Glasgow on the floor. Won't that help you ?

NADA. He's gone away to study it.

[Note.—A scratching sound was heard on the floor.]

J. F. Now it comes back to me. I worked for a time in India Street not far from Charing Cross.

S. But Charing Cross is in London, isn't it ?

J. F. No, Charing Cross, Glasgow—George Street was not far away.

S. What were you working at ?

J. F. Oh, motors.

S. What was the name of the firm ?

J. F. Inarticulate.

S. Now try to tell me where you were buried.

J. F. It was a large cemetery—South—South Necrop—

S. Say that again.

J. F. South Necrop—

[Note.—Clearly an attempt to give South Necropolis, one of the names I had chosen. At the moment of the sitting, however, I had forgotten it.]

S. Would you remember anything about the grave ?

J. F. A double grave—Amy my daughter—a large cross—one grave for two.

S. How old was your daughter Amy ?

J. F. Four years. (*Note.—Consistent with previous statement.*)

S. What were you doing with motors ?

J. F. Sounded something like "design" but uncertain.

S. When did you come to London ?

J. F. About 1903.

S. What made you come to London ?

- J. F. Firm had a branch there. Was sent—then got Jim into London branch.
- S. Did Jim go into the firm about 1903 ?
- J. F. No, about 1908.
- S. What was Jim doing before then ?
- J. F. Helping father—instruct—inarticulate—sounded like maps.
- S. Where was Jim working ?
- J. F. At seaside place.
- S. Can you tell me the name ?
- J. F. Can't get it.  
(Pause.)
- F. Glad Gordon was able to come.
- S. Do you know anything about him ?
- F. Think he was shot, poor fellow—I never knew him, Sam.
- S. Well, don't forget to bring him next time first thing.
- F. Shan't forget—there's no power, Sam—Goodbye.
- AFID. Power is going.

[*Note.*—On the morning of January 9, which was the date arranged for my next sitting, I received before leaving home a brief note from Captain Shoemsmith, R.N.R., stating that he was sorry he was unable to throw any light on the questions contained in my letter. Further, "he had no recollections of pictures or cats" in connection with the residence "Paglesham," which he did not occupy prior to 1913. All the statements of John Ferguson with regard to Highland Avenue are therefore definitely proved to be false. There is, however, one curious point to be noticed. Captain Shoemsmith's letter bore as its address the single word "Plymouth," and is dated January 7, 1922. In Sitting No. 18 it will be remembered that in reply to a question of the sitter, John Ferguson stated that "Shoeshine" had gone to the seaside and mentioned "Plym" as the name of the place. This new residence of Captain Shoemsmith was quite unknown to myself and my letter of enquiry was addressed to Brentwood. At my interview with Mr. Symonds, the Postmaster, I merely learned that Captain Shoemsmith had left

Brentwood. Had Mr. Symonds mentioned Plymouth I should most certainly have taken a note of it at the time. Quite possibly, therefore, we have in this case telepathy from Mr. Symonds to Mrs. Cooper via myself. I will give now the record of part of Sitting No. 21 which contains the denouement of the Ferguson case.]

*Sitting No. 21.*

January 9, 1922, 3.40 p.m. Weather fair.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(The first part of this Sitting was occupied by attempts to induce Gordon Davis to communicate directly and to the statements which Nada purported to be getting from him. But towards the end of the sitting and before James Miles appeared, I enquired after John Ferguson in whom I had now lost interest.)

S. After a pause. Nada, I would like to have a chat with John Ferguson.

NADA. Is not coming any more—Says he's fed up—no use—  
he only gets worse and worse.

S. Couldn't you bring him for the last time?

NADA. He says it's no good—no more.

S. Was he really a spirit?

NADA. Yes, but he was muddled.

S. [Shoeshine] said he never heard of him. What do you say to that?

NADA. Suited [Shoeshine] not to own him perhaps.

S. You still stick up for him?

NADA. Yes. It's wicked trying to confuse spirits.

S. I didn't try to confuse him.

NADA. I think you did.

S. No, I tried to help him.

NADA. We won't discuss it.

(Pause.)

(Frank speaks.)

F. Sam, you shouldn't let this worry you.

S. What do you think of John Ferguson?

- F. Think he got mixed up, Sam. Mistook your thoughts for his own.
- S. How do you mean ?
- F. His mind was blank. He caught at any thoughts flying round—he'd have believed he was Jonah if you had told him so.
- S. But I didn't tell him he was anything.
- F. You thought it—no difference.
- S. How did he get hold of that address Warescott Road, Brentwood ?
- F. Bit doubtful—might really have been someone from there.
- S. Do you mean a spirit from there ?
- F. Yes, spirit (inarticulate). You see, John had forgot all about himself—clutched at any straw in the wind—couldn't bear to think he was nobody.
- S. Could I make you think you were somebody else ?
- F. Inarticulate.
- S. Could I make you think you were John Ferguson ?
- F. No, Sam. Should see through it.
- S. Why would you see through it.
- F. Things would come back to me—you know too much.
- S. What do you mean ?
- F. Know too much about me. Could always find myself in you.

(Voice becomes faint and ceases. After an interval a new communicator, James Miles, appears, whose case is considered separately in Section 3.)

[*Note.*—At this stage the statements of John Ferguson were virtually disproved. It only remained to disprove his assertions about his burial in the year 1912 at the South Necropolis, Glasgow. On January 5 I addressed a letter to the Keeper of the Cemetery, asking him to make a list for me of all the Fergusons, male and female, who had been interred in the South Necropolis since the year 1890. An examination of this list show conclusively that no John and Amy Ferguson were buried in the same grave, and further that no John Ferguson was buried on March 3, 1912.

A communication from James Anderson, Keeper of the South Necropolis, Glasgow, is printed in Appendix C.

On examining the map after Sitting 20, I found that the streets mentioned—namely, George Street, Charing Cross, and India Street,—were all quite close together. India Street was in very small type indeed. It would seem as though a little area of this map had been visualised by myself unconsciously and transferred to the medium.]

It would appear from the study of "John Ferguson" that the case for spontaneous telepathy between medium and sitter is far stronger than the average psychic researcher usually admits. Indeed, it would seem to be so extensive that in the present state of our knowledge we are not justified in putting any limits to it. A large number of the incidents described in Section 1 purporting to come from the mind of my deceased brother may be so many examples of spontaneous telepathy from myself. And it would even appear that a purely fictitious communicator like John Ferguson can sometimes give supernormal information about facts unknown to the sitter, *e.g.* his knowledge of Captain Shoemith's removal to Plymouth.

The hypothesis of conscious fraud on the part of the medium in this case may obviously be lightly dismissed. No intelligent person who cares to study the evidence could entertain it for a moment. If there was fraud we should clearly have to assume that the sitter was also a party to it. In the end, therefore, the case rests largely on my own honesty, and there I must leave it.

### SECTION 3.

#### The Case of James Miles.

Although the evidence is mainly of a negative character, I have thought it worth while for purposes of comparison to give some account of this case.

The case of "James Miles" would appear to be one of cryptomnesia rather than of conscious fraud. The cases discussed elsewhere in our paper do not support the theory of conscious fraud on the part of the medium, and there seems no reason to assume it here. To suppose that

Mrs. Cooper had read the account of James Miles' death in the *Daily Express* and unconsciously dramatised it is, on the whole, the most rational explanation. There is in the later sittings a certain amount of evidence for telepathy from the sitter's mind but practically no evidence for any independent exercise of the medium's supernormal faculty on the life of James Miles.

It may be suggested that the reason why real supernormal information was not forthcoming in this case is possibly to be found in the fact that no link of any kind existed between James Miles and the sitter. Exactly what constitutes a link is at present a very difficult matter to determine. Osty seems to look upon a link as consisting of some object, living or inanimate, which has had physical associations with the subject upon whom the psychic desires to exercise her powers. But, however this may be, it is certain that the sitter neither possessed any object connected with James Miles nor was acquainted with any of his friends or relatives. Nor had he ever been to Bath, the place where James Miles lived, or previous to the sittings to the best of his knowledge known any people who hailed from there.

#### ABSTRACT OF FIRST TWO "MILES" SITTINGS.

In lieu of quoting the full records which have been filed for purposes of reference, it will be sufficient to give a summary of the various statements made by the communicator.

#### *Sitting No. 21.*

*Monday, January 9, 1922, 3.40 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

Towards the end of the sitting there spoke a boyish voice saying in rather pathetic accents, "Oh! where am I? I don't know where I am."

This communicator then said that his name was James, and that he had fallen into the water, "while trying to catch" something. At this sitting he was unable to give his surname but said that he was only thirteen years old

and had lived at Bath. He had fallen into the River Avon. At home they called him "Jimmy," and he was very anxious that his father should hear from him. In reply to a question by the sitter he stated that he had "passed over," only a few days ago.

Between this sitting and the next no enquiries were made by the sitter relating to the matter.

*Sitting No. 22.*

*Monday, January 16, 1922, 3.40 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

"James" appeared again. The voice and style of address were reminiscent of the last sitting. The boy said that his father was a painter, who lived at "Clarence Place." He next spelt out his surname as M—I—L—E—S, giving James Miles as his full name. In reply to a question he said that his father did not live at Bath, but in a town not very far away. This place was ultimately spelt out as W—E—S—T—O—N. The medium (who comes from Bristol) suggested that Weston might be Weston-super-Mare, a place with which she was acquainted.

James told us that "He had lots of brothers and sisters," and mentioned, "Little Sid" or "Little Sis." He said that he was on a visit to Bath, and was playing with some other boys. Asked what it was he was "trying to catch," he said it was "nothing alive," but something "I had given me."

He then attempted to give the name of a street where he lived as LOCK—followed by another syllable having the PR or BR sound and a D at the end. The last half of the word "had to do with water." Asked if the day was warm and sunny when he fell into the water, he replied, "No, it was very cold." In reply to the question "Did no one try to save you?" he gave the answer, "It was too deep."

As a result of the information obtained at the two previous sittings, I consulted the English directory on January 17 and discovered that UPPER WESTON and LOWER WESTON are parts of BATH, and that further

there is a LOCKSBROOK ROAD in LOWER WESTON. The statement that the second part of the name "had to do with water" made it practically certain that I was on the right track. I accordingly selected the name of a responsible resident, "J. T. Fryer, Esq., Builder's Merchant," living in LOCKSBROOK ROAD, and wrote to him asking if he would kindly confirm the facts given at the sittings. I addressed a similar letter to the "Registrar of Births and Deaths," Bath.

On January 19 I received a reply from the Rev. A. T. Fryer, 63 Newbridge Road, Bath. The following is an abbreviation of Mr. Fryer's letter :

63 NEWBRIDGE ROAD,  
BATH,  
18.1.1922.

DEAR SIR,

Your letter addressed to my brother J. T. Fryer, (who died six years ago) came into my hands this morning. As an hon. associate of the Society for Psychical Research<sup>1</sup> I am naturally interested in your enquiry, and shall be pleased to aid you in this case as far as possible. James Miles was drowned a short time since near here. I will try to get the newspaper report of the inquest and forward to you (rest of letter omitted),

Yours faithfully,  
A. T. FRYER.

On Friday, January 20, 1922, I received from the Rev. A. T. Fryer a cutting from the Bath Herald of Friday, December 30, 1921.

*THE "BATH HERALD," FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1921.*

BOY'S LIFE FOR A TOY

SLIPS INTO THE AVON AND IS DROWNED

CORONER SAYS ALL BOYS SHOULD SWIM

*Inquest on Weston Victim*

That all boys should learn to swim is tragically emphasised by the death of James Alymer Miles, 13, son of

<sup>1</sup>It will be remembered that the Rev. A. T. Fryer was a member of the Council of the S.P.R. for several years.

Charles Miles, of 5 Clarence Place, Lower Weston, who, in trying to recover a toy balloon from the Avon yesterday slipped in and was drowned in the presence of his three chums. The inquest was held at the Guildhall to-day by the City Coroner (Mr. F. E. Shum).

“JIMMY IS IN THE WATER.”

Charles Miles, the father, who is a painter by trade, said he last saw his boy alive at 9 o'clock on Thursday morning. He was at West Twerton School. He was a very strong healthy lad, but could not swim. He was at home about 1.30, mid-day, when three boys came to inform him of the tragedy. They said that “Jimmy was in the water drowned.” He asked where it was and at once hastened to the spot, between the Midland Railway bridge and the Weston toll bridge, but he could see nothing of him in the water. There was no one there at the time. Witness went to the Twerton Police Station, where he was informed that a boat was being procured to drag the river. He himself returned to the river bank. He was present when the body was recovered by the police, between 3 o'clock and half past. It was taken to the mortuary.

Leonard Pitt, aged 12, a schoolboy, in giving evidence, said James Miles was a friend of his. They went straight from home to the river bank. The day before a boat had been pulled out and they went to see it, but it had been removed. . . . Then “Jimmy” saw what appeared to be a toy balloon in the water near the bank. “Jimmy” said he was going after it. The bank was not very steep there, the deceased put his foot on a loose piece of turf and slipped in. . . . Witness and some other boys ran up for a drag pole near the bridge, but there was none there. (Rest of account omitted).

On Saturday, January 21, 1922, in reply to my letter addressed to the “Registrar of Births and Deaths,” I received from Mr. W. E. Winckworth, Superintendent Registrar of 12 Charlotte Street, Bath, a cutting from the *Bath Weekly Chronicle*, published before the date of the inquest on “James Miles.”

From this account of the tragedy I shall quote only such items as are important in view of developments at subsequent sittings. Under a sub-heading "A FATAL SLIP" we read :

Miles, it appears, noticed a toy balloon floating down the river near the bank. He at once exclaimed, "That's my balloon," and endeavoured to secure it. His two companions appear to have taken little interest in his find, and were possibly engrossed in a game of their own. At all events, Miles appears to have attempted to secure the balloon without the assistance of his companions. He scrambled down the bank, which is rather steep at this point, and presumably encountered some insecure foothold. At all events, his horror-stricken companions told a *Bath Chronicle* representative that they watched him "roll" into the water. . . . No cry was heard and the tragedy seems to have ended before help was forthcoming.

Further on in the report occurs the statement: "The boy, James Miles, was a member of 'Uncle Fred's' League, which is conducted in connection with the *Bath Weekly Chronicle*, and was one of the recipients of a 'Joy Parcel' in the recent Christmas distribution. His mother is in somewhat poor health, and recently underwent an operation in hospital. Thursday's tragic happening has naturally distressed her extremely."

I had arranged to have my next sitting on Monday, January 23, but unfortunately an attack of influenza obliged me to postpone it until Monday, January 30.

In the meantime on Friday, January 27, I visited the offices of various London newspapers and copied from the files the accounts of the fatality published on December 30, 1921, and December 31. I found that accounts of the tragedy had appeared in three London Newspapers—the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Chronicle*, and the *Daily Express*. Of these accounts only that given in the *Daily Express* tallied exactly with the statements made at the two previous sittings. This report read as follows :

“*DAILY EXPRESS*” DECEMBER 30, 1921.

*Boy's Life for a toy*

*Drowned in rescuing his Balloon*

A toy balloon received as a Christmas present caused the death of a thirteen year old school boy named James Miles at Bath yesterday. The balloon was blown into the Avon and Miles and two other boys tried to rescue it. Miles slipped while scrambling down a steep bank and fell into deep water. Meanwhile the balloon had drifted out of sight.

Miles was one of a family of eleven.

His father is a painter at Clarence Place, Locksbrook Road, Weston.

The *Daily Chronicle* mentioned all the facts given by the communicator with the exception of the address “Clarence Place.” The *Daily Mail* gave much less information than did “James Miles” at the sittings.

I will now give a brief summary of certain additional statements made by James Miles at sittings No. 23 and 24.

*Sitting No. 23.*

Monday, January 30, 1922, 3.40 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

At this sitting the voices were rather indistinct. Nada appeared and gave the word LOCKSBROOK correctly. She then mentioned “a pink thing” which she thought “was on Jimmy's bed.” A little later “James” himself purported to speak, and I asked him to give me details about his home and family. He mentioned a baby “named George that died when it was a year old.” “Bobby,” “Willie” and “J—” were mentioned as the names of his brothers. There was a reference to “Little Sid” (or possibly “Little Sis”)—“a sweet little thing,” and also a mention of an “Uncle Frank” (possibly an attempt to give the “Uncle Fred” of the *Bath Chronicle's* report which I had read). A date June 20, was given as being that of someone's birthday, possibly “Willie's birthday.”

A little later came a statement which seemed to refer to some insurance money. "It wasn't much money. Father took it—paid to him—a big building—" (sounded like "£2").

*Sitting No. 24.*

*Monday, February 6, 1922, 3.30 p.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.*

"James" appeared again, but said "he was all mixed up, and didn't know what he was saying." He repeated the names "Bobbie" and "Willie" of the previous sitting, and gave an additional name, "Mary." He also mentioned a boy named "Seymour," aged 11. He went on to speak about "Two gates not far from where he lived," . . . "Two gates we used to go through . . . one broken . . . I scratched my name on it." "Scratched 'J.M.' and 'Olly.'" Towards the end of the sitting Nada made the statement, "The mother is very ill. That's a good test."

[*Note.*—I had read that the mother was very ill in the *Bath Weekly Chronicle*, but was not thinking of the fact at the moment. S. G. S.]

There was also a reference to "A man putting out a big stick" (possibly some confused attempt to bring in "the drag poles") of which I had read in the inquest report. S. G. S.).

On February 7 I sent a list of the statements made at Sittings 23 and 24 to the Rev. A. T. Fryer for investigation, and on February 10 received a report from him. Mr. Fryer stated that he had had an interview with Mr. Miles at his home at 5 Clarence Place on Wednesday evening, February 8. It appears from Mr. Fryer's long and detailed report that practically all the information given at these last two sittings was incorrect. The names "Bobbie," "Willie," and "Sid," for instance, were not the names of the lad's brothers as stated. The "important date (June 20)" seemed to have no connection with the family. The bed coverlet was not pink, and although there was "a broken gate" in the neighbourhood of the

boy's home it appeared that "James" had not carved his initials on it. Mr. Miles had received some insurance money in respect to the dead boy, but states that he did not think "James" knew he was insured. Certainly the amount was more than "£2." The statement concerning the mother's illness was correct, but the sitter had read it previously in the *Bath Chronicle*.

At Sitting No. 25 held on February 13, 1922, when there was present, besides myself, Mr. Harold Rankin, of "Broomhills," Rochford, Essex, the name "Helen," or "Nellie," was given as the name of the mother of James Miles. This proved to be incorrect. "Jimmy" also mentioned that his father's name was "Charles," a fact which the sitter had previously read in the "Bath" newspapers. "James Miles" did not appear at any subsequent sittings.

It should be added that in a letter dated 16.11.1922, Mr. Fryer states that "James, so his brother says, was not given to cutting his name on any gate." "As to the mention of the lad named 'Seymour,' the children at home have made inquiries amongst the school children and the lads of the Boys' Brigade, but there is no 'Seymour' amongst them."

#### OBSERVATIONS AND DEDUCTIONS.

A careful inspection of the London press reports and comparison with the records of Sittings 21 and 22 shows that all the verified facts given at the first two sittings were published in at least one London newspaper, the *Daily Express*. Further we see that there is no correct statement obtained at these two sittings that could not have been deduced from the account in the *Daily Express* of December 30. An interesting feature of this case is the remarkable way in which every scrap of information given in the London press is utilised to support the impersonation of the deceased lad. Thus, when I ask "James" the question, "Did no one try to save you?" he replies, "It was too deep."

In the *Daily Express* we read "He fell into deep water."

Again "James" says, "I've such a lot of brothers and sisters," while the Daily Express states, "Miles was one of a family of 11."

It is when we come to compare the wealth of accurate detail given at the first two sittings with the press account and then contrast this with the poverty and inaccuracy of the later "communications" that no doubt is left in our minds that the newspapers were the source of the information. "Jimmy," who was able to "get through" such complicated names as "LOCKSBROOK" and "CLARENCE PLACE" fails to give correctly the name of a single brother or sister or school mate. As the "spirit" of "James Miles" he falls obviously to the ground.

But in what sense is the newspaper the source of the information? I have satisfied myself that during the days December 30 and 31 I saw no newspaper except the Daily Chronicle. I was staying in the country at the time, and spent the days in long walks. During those two days the Daily Chronicle was the only paper available to me, but as the report of the fatality was printed on the first page I must almost certainly have read it. This paper, however, could hardly have been the source of the communications since the important name "Clarence Place" is omitted from the account.

There is good reason for believing that the London Daily Express and not the "Bath" or West Country newspapers was the true source. In the first place, while the correct information given at Sittings 21 and 22 just covers the Daily Express account it does not nearly exhaust the store contained in the Bath Herald or the Bath Chronicle. But there is another more conclusive argument. In Sitting No. 22 "James" makes concerning the toy balloon the statement "It was something I had given me." Now all the London Papers state definitely that the balloon was a Christmas present to the boy James. In the "Bath" papers, on the contrary, there is nothing to lead one to believe that this balloon belonged to James Miles. In fact, the general impression made by reading the reports is to the effect that the boy found

the balloon in the water. Thus Leonard Pitt in his evidence at the inquest says: "Jimmy saw what appeared to be a toy balloon in the water near the bank." It is true that in the *Bath Chronicle* we read that the boy was the recipient of a "Joy Parcel," but we are not told that the balloon was part of the contents of this parcel.

One other interesting point calls for note. The "Direct Voice" gave correctly (a) the fact that the mother was very ill and (b) the father's name "Charles." Neither of these facts were given in the London newspapers, but they were not given at the sittings until the sitter had read them in the "Bath" papers. We have here some evidence for "transference" from the unconscious mind of the sitter to the automatism of the medium. It is the kind of transference which we have studied in greater detail in the case of "John Ferguson." By the study of such cases as these we learn that the mere dramatisation of a communicator by tricks of intonation, peculiar and consistent style of address and the like, affords no guarantee that we are in touch with discarnate agency. The tendency to impersonate seems to be a native tendency of the unconscious mind. It is by the quality of the information they communicate and by that alone that we must test the claims of so-called "spirits." Judged by this test the "spirit" of James Miles certainly falls to the ground. Nor need it be imagined that we are putting forward such cases as this as an argument against the possibility that some of the mental phenomena exhibited by mediums are the result of discarnate agency. It is almost certain that the mental phenomena of automatism have their origin in many sources. Sometimes the source (as in this case) is the acquired knowledge of the psychic, sometimes it is the acquired knowledge of the sitter transferred to the medium's automatism. The important duty of the investigator is to track each piece of information to its most probable source. In this spirit we hope to continue our observations.

To sum up then, we are bound to assume that the present case is one of cryptomnesia on the part of the

medium. The medium states that she does not read the *Daily Express*, and in view of this statement there is just the bare possibility that the medium clairvoyantly read the contents of the newspaper paragraph or that she obtained the information from the unconscious minds of the thousands who must have read and assimilated the accounts of the tragedy of James Miles. It is "in the air," so to speak. But if such clairvoyance there be, it scarcely seems to extend in this case beyond the limits of a London newspaper.

It is curious that Mr. Fryer in the course of his investigations should have come across a gate inscribed with initials. But this is probably a coincidence. Indeed it would have applied equally well, in fact far better if it had been given as a piece of information to support the impersonation of my brother Frank. Frank actually did carve his name on the gates near home, whereas "James" we are told "was not in the habit of scratching his name on gates." Again, there is the question of the insurance money paid to Mr. Miles, and not mentioned in any newspaper. That is curious, but it may be nothing more than a lucky guess by the unconscious mind of the medium. There is a lack of definite and clear evidence for any independent clairvoyance in this case and we cannot, therefore, assume it.

In conclusion, our thanks are due to the Rev. A. T. Fryer for his co-operation in investigating the facts given at the sittings; but for his help we might never have reached our present conclusions.

#### SECTION 4.

##### The Case of Gordon Davis.

##### A "Communication" from a Living Person.

In discussing this remarkable case it would be perhaps entirely illogical, although practically convenient to describe the case as one of "communication" by a living person. There is not a great deal of real evidence to justify us in

saying that the living Gordon Davis took any active part in the affair. We know that his conscious mind was busy interviewing clients on both occasions on which he was supposed to communicate. All that we are entitled to say is that a communication was received concerning Gordon Davis; that is to say, certain facts were communicated about his life history, past and future. Some of these facts were given in the form of verbal statements describing incidents which had happened or which were to happen; other facts such as his vocal characteristics were expressed in a purely physical way.

For mediums to obtain knowledge supernormally about a living person is not an infrequent occurrence, but cases in which the living person appears to "control" the psychic and is dramatised and made to speak in the first person are, I believe, extremely rare, although not unknown.

In the case under consideration the supernormal knowledge shown is of a high order. Not only is there penetration into the past of the "communicator," but there are considerable indications that the future was also anticipated.

There is further (I think) some grounds for the assumption that this prevision was of the purely psychic kind rather than of the kind that is built up upon inferences drawn from present data. Granting this assumption, the case has special interest in relation to those theories in which the material universe is regarded as a four-dimensional complex, with time as the fourth dimension. Looked at from this point of view, human beings have an extension in time as well as in the other three dimensions. They exist in their totality independently of the particular moment at which we choose to view them. The personality of Gordon Davis was arrested, as it were, at a particular point of the time stream—i.e. a special three-dimensional section was taken of his four-dimensional complex. He was dramatised in 1922 to appear as he would be in his new environment of 1923.

One very interesting point arises. This dramatised personality, so accurate in its other statements, apparently

believes itself to be a deceased person. We might, of course, assume that this idea was suggested to it by the spiritistic mind of the medium, who in turn obtained false information from the mind of the sitter. But is this the true explanation ?

It is to be noted that Gordon Davis does not give any details about the circumstances of his death. It is true that "Frank" expresses some "belief" that G. D. was killed in the war, but it must be remembered that Frank could not tell anything else about him, and the possibility is that he was merely "guessing."

#### RECORD OF GORDON DAVIS SITTINGS.

##### *Sitting No. 20.*

Wednesday, January 4, 1922, 11.10 a.m. Present: MRS. COOPER.  
[Postponed from Wednesday, December 28, 1921.] S. G. SOAL.

(At the commencement of the sitting Nada remarked, "think there's someone wants to speak to you.")

(Frank speaks.)

1.<sup>1</sup> F. Sam, I've brought someone who knows you.

2. S. All right, let him speak.

(Pause.)

(A voice well articulated and extraordinarily clear and strong began to speak. From the first moment I had a lightning impression that the tone was quite familiar to me, but I could not immediately place it. It was a surprisingly well modulated voice with a most fastidious accent. I knew at once that Mrs. Cooper had never produced anything so good at my sittings before.)

3. VOICE. Well, Soal, I never expected to speak to you in this fashion.

[*Note.*—This sentence was delivered with an extraordinary variety of tone, and also with great energy.]

4. S. Who are you then ?

<sup>1</sup> These numbers refer to Mr. Davis' statement, see below p. 573.

5. VOICE. Remember Davis—Gordon from R—R—Roch—  
Roch—  
 [Note.—This word was not completed, but I easily understood it was an attempt to say “Rochford.”]
6. S. By Jove, and it's like Gordon Davis, too.
7. VOICE. The dead to the living. Queer world, what?—My  
poor wife is my only worry now—and kiddie.
8. S. Can you really be Gordon Davis? I had heard  
you were killed.
9. VOICE. The same—what's left of me.
10. S. But what proof could you give me that you are  
Davis?
11. VOICE. Here, I must hold on—not used to this.
12. NADA. He's a very strong spirit—may hurt the medium.  
 (Short interval of silence.)
13. VOICE. Remember the old school? How I always argued  
 13a. with H—H—Hs—Hs—oh confound these names  
 13b. —was for brighter geog—brighter geography—  
harpoons and things.
14. S. I remember about your arguing with Histed but  
nothing about harpoons. Try to tell me where  
you lived. That's something I don't know.
15. VOICE. At Roch—you mean?
16. S. That will do.
17. VOICE. (Not so strong)—Near the M—Ma—Malt.
18. NADA. He must rest for a bit.  
 (Another silent interval. Then voice is heard quite strong again.)
19. VOICE. Remember our last little talk?
20. S. Yes, I do quite well. Where was it?
21. VOICE. In the train—about guards—not train guards  
 21a. though. A little confab on the work of guards.  
That help you?
22. S. I can recall it excellently.
23. VOICE. Seems ages since to me—remember Playle and O—  
 Over—Over—
24. S. I think I know who you mean, but tell me where  
your wife lives.
25. VOICE. Old chap, I can't hold on—not a second longer.

26. NADA. He's losing control, but he's showing me the letter "E" and some figures, but I can't see what they are. Two E's.
- 26a.
27. S. What would the letter "E" mean, Nada?
28. NADA. Feel sure it has to do with the address of his wife. He's very anxious to send news to her, poor thing. It was a great shock to her.
- 28a.
29. S. Can't you bring him again?
30. NADA. Not this time—the medium could not stand it.—
- 30a. She went right out of her body.

(Pause.)

[*Note.*—I thought at this point the sitting had finished, but in a few minutes John Ferguson began to speak. All during the time Gordon Davis had been talking and during the intervals Mrs. Cooper had remained quite silent. At the end of the sitting she seemed quite confused and unable to recall either what John Ferguson or Gordon Davis had been talking about. She said her head was aching badly. I had not heard her complain of this before. Between this sitting and the next I did not make any enquiries about Gordon Davis.]

*Sitting No. 21.*

January 9, 1922, 3.40 p.m. Weather fair.

*Present:* MRS. COOPER.  
S. G. SOAL.

(Nada spoke first.)

31. NADA. Pleased to see you again.
32. S. Pleased to see you, Nada. Can you bring Gordon Davis to speak again.
33. NADA. Doubtful—it's very bad for her—too strong.
34. S. Who is too strong?
35. NADA. Gordon.
36. S. Well I hope you'll try to bring him.
37. NADA. He mustn't come again like that. But I will try to make him whisper things to me.

(A short pause, during which Nada is heard to whisper something indistinctly.)

38. NADA. He's trying to tell me about his house. He says something about a funny dark tunnel—it's to do with his house.

39. S. Is this at Rochford?

40. NADA. Don't think it's there.

(Nada is heard to whisper again, but I cannot catch a word.)

41. NADA. He says there's five or six steps and a half.

42. S. Is that at the front or the back of the house.

43. NADA. Think it's the front.

44. S. Could you ask him to tell you what is inside the house.

[*Note.*—I asked this question out of idleness. I did not expect there would be any truth in the answer.]

45. NADA. I'll speak to him (whispers again). (I catch the word 'house.')

46. NADA. He says there's a very large mirror and lots of pictures. Oh, these are not like the pictures in

46a. John Ferguson's. These pictures are all scenes.

47. S. What are they scenes of?

48. NADA. Glorious mountains and the sea—there's one picture

48a. where a road or something seems to go between two hills.

49. S. Anything else.

50. NADA. Some vases—very big ones with such funny tops

50a. and saucers, but not to drink out of.

51. NADA. He says there's a woman there now and a little

51a. boy. Believe it's a woman very fond of the

51b. country and country things.—Fond of flowers—think it's his wife.

52. S. Could you describe her or give her name?

53. NADA. I can't see her. He's telling me something, but I can't hear. He's getting farther away.

54. NADA. Oh, downstairs there's two funny brass candlesticks.

55. S. Where are they?

56. NADA. Think they are on a shelf. He's so far away

56a. I can't hear him, but there's something right in

56b. front of his house—not a verandah—something that's not in front of the other houses.

57. S. Is the house in a street ?
58. NADA. Joined up to others—don't think it's a proper street—like half a street.
- 58a. street—like half a street.
59. S. Could you give the name of the street.
60. NADA. Get the letter "E's."
61. S. Would that be East Street ? (Thinking of East Street, Prittlewell. S. G. S.)
62. NADA. Don't think so, but he's gone right away.  
(Voice ceases and there is an interval in which lights appear. Afterwards John Ferguson communicates.)

In the record of my sittings I have found one and only one more slight reference to Gordon Davis. It was during Sitting No. 23, held on Monday, January 30, 1922, 3.40 p.m. This reference occurred during a pause in the middle of the sitting. James Miles had been communicating and was apparently resting. I asked Nada if Gordon Davis could come again.

- NADA. Is not coming any more.
- S. Can't he come and talk to you. He need not use the voice directly.
- NADA. He can't because he's too far away now.
- S. Try to get him.
63. NADA. Only see his house, but it's not clear—can't get anything. There's something about black dickie bird—think it's on piano—not sure about it.
- S. Would this be in Gordon Davis' house ?
- NADA. Think it would be his house—it's very uncertain because he isn't here.  
(Frank then speaks and tries to give a book test, which is unsuccessful. Afterwards James Miles is mentioned again and sitting concludes.)

#### SITTER'S PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMMUNICATOR.

Gordon Davis and I were at school together during the years 1898 to 1901. At school I knew of him rather than knew him, for he was in a higher form than myself. I have a distinct recollection that he was a very intelligent

boy, disposed to ask disconcerting questions during our lessons in science and geography, which subjects I took with him in the same class. He was, even at school, something of a dandy, and somewhat more refined in his speech than the rest of us. Of his people I knew nothing, except that they lived at Rochford, while I lived  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. I feel fairly certain that I never knew in what part of Rochford, Gordon Davis lived. Doubtless we must have spoken to each other at school, but I cannot recall a single conversation. Probably I really saw very little of him, owing to the fact that I was a younger boy than himself, and in a lower class. I fancy he left school somewhere about the year 1901, and for many years after that I lost sight of him. I may have had some vague idea that he had started business in Southend, and I may possibly have seen him walking in the street, but I cannot remember ever speaking to him until one day in May, 1916, I met him on the platform of Shenfield Station, where we were both waiting for the London train. We were at that time both cadets, he in the infantry and I in the artillery, and we were both returning from week-end leave. I was, I remember, going to Bexhill, but I do not remember his destination. As boys who had been to school together we recognised each other, but he seemed to know me better than I knew him, for he it was who spoke first. We entered the same compartment and travelled together as far as Liverpool Street, which is about half an hour's journey from Shenfield. During the ride I am quite certain we did not discuss family matters at all; he did not even tell me whether he was married or not. We spent all the time comparing the routine of artillery with that of infantry cadets, and I remember very vividly how he mentioned to me that he had been detailed "to give a lecture to the other cadets on the duties of the guard." Gordon Davis seemed full of the Army, and I noticed especially that he had cultivated a rather nice accent. We parted at Liverpool Street, and I heard no more of him for a long time. I knew, of course, that as an Infantry Officer he would be sent to the Front very soon. In August of the same year I was myself sent to France,

and did not return until I was wounded in June, 1917. I then returned to England, spent a year in the Isle of Wight as Instructor of Cadets, was sent to Oxford as chief instructor in mathematics at the Army School of Education, and was finally demobilised in the spring of 1919. It would be some time in the autumn of 1920, that I received a false impression that Gordon Davis had been killed in the War. On my way to visit a friend at Rochford one day, I met a man with whom I was very slightly acquainted, and with this man I walked for a mile, our paths being in the same direction. He began to speak of the men belonging to Rochford who had died in the War, and I feel almost certain that he told me<sup>1</sup> "Gordon Davis has gone west too." This news made a considerable impression on me at the time, and I mentioned at home that Gordon Davis had been killed. My remarks did not excite much comment, because no one at home knew Gordon Davis, and I did not personally make any enquiries, because our acquaintance had only been of the slightest. I often, however, thought of him and of our last meeting in the train, and how tragically things had ended for him. It never, indeed, occurred to me to doubt that he had been killed. I took it for granted that the news I had received was correct. Had I made the least enquiries I should certainly have had my impression corrected quickly enough, for he had started business in Southend as an Estate Agent, and was becoming very well known in the district. I live, however, in Prittlewell and do not very frequently visit either Southend or Rochford, and in this fact is to be found an explanation of my continued belief that Gordon Davis was dead. When I received my first communication from Gordon Davis on January 4, 1922, I was considerably impressed, particularly by the lifelike reproduction of mannerisms of speech, tone of voice, and accent, but I did not attach any very great weight to the subject matter of the communication which did not (at the time) appear

<sup>1</sup>I have heard independently from both Mr. and Mrs. Davis that after the armistice there was a widespread rumour in the district that Mr. Davis had been killed.

to me to go much beyond what I had known of Gordon Davis. I was certainly impressed by the giving of the word "Malt," because I knew that there is a large building at Rochford called "The Malting," now used as a storehouse for flour, etc. At this particular period of my psychic researches I had just concluded the long study of telepathy in the case of *John Ferguson*, and I formed the idea that the case of *Gordon Davis* could probably be explained in a similar manner, i.e. by transference of fragments of knowledge from the sitter's mind to that of the medium. I paid still less attention to the description of the house by *Nada* at the sitting of January 9. I thought it was all the purest fiction. Very fortunately at both sittings I had taken verbatim notes of every detail, and my brother, Mr. C. W. Soal, corroborates reading these notes in the Christmas holidays of 1921, when he was home on vacation. It was in February, 1925, that I first learned indirectly that Gordon Davis was alive and practising as an Estate Agent in Southend-on-Sea. I heard also that he had only been living in Southend-on-Sea for a year or two, and I therefore conjectured that the verification of the details given by *Nada* about his house would be an extremely difficult matter. I learned, moreover, about the end of February that *Gordon Davis* was living at No. 54 Eastern Esplanade, and I was at once struck by the fact that the two "E's" mentioned by *Nada* as giving the address would be applicable to this street. Pressure of work prevented me from paying a visit to Gordon Davis until the evening of April 8, 1925.

#### RECORD OF MY VISIT TO GORDON DAVIS.

I arrived at Mr. Davis' house No. 54 Eastern Esplanade, at 8.30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8. I noticed at once that to reach the front door one had to ascend a flight of six steps, and that the lowest of these steps was an extremely thin slab of stone in comparison with the other five steps. I noticed also that the house was part of a single long block of houses facing the sea. There were no houses on the other side of the street. I noticed also

before ringing the bell, a kind of curious tunnel which leads from the street into the back gardens of the block. There were several such tunnels—one between each two doors. The door was opened by Mrs. Davis, who admitted me into the drawing room on the ground floor, and asked me to wait for a few moments, while she informed her husband of my visit. At the time of my arrival the drawing room was in darkness but there was a light in the dining room which is in the basement. When the electric light was switched on in the drawing room, I immediately noticed that there were many pictures hung on the walls, and that all these pictures contained either mountains or seascapes. I also noticed several fairly large vases, and two objects on one of the walls which I should have unhesitatingly described as "saucers." There was also a very large mirror above the mantelpiece which arrested my attention. In a short time Mr. Gordon Davis entered the room, and after we had exchanged greetings I began to broach to him the object of my visit. Before, however, I had showed him any of my papers I noticed that he had used the expression "Old man" twice, and "Old chap" once, which affords an independent verification of (25). When I explained somewhat hesitatingly that I had come to talk to him about psychic matters, he remarked, "Old man, I've tried all my life to steer clear of these things and I will tell you why. A man like myself whose mind is always running on his business has no time for this sort of thing. It's all very well for people who have leisure. I've noticed another thing. I've noticed that people who go in for this kind of thing are nearly always damned unlucky. I suppose I'm a bit superstitious myself; would never walk under a ladder or use the third match." I then explained briefly about my direct voice sittings and communicated to him the somewhat astounding news that he himself had been a communicator at one of these sittings. I then handed him a typewritten record of the sitting on January 4. He was very much amused, and kept exclaiming, "Just the very words I should use." When he came to the word "Malt" he said, "Why,

that is the name of the house where I lived at Rochford, twenty-five years ago." It was always called "The Malting," if anyone wanted specially to refer to it. When he came to the phrase "harpoons—was for brighter geography," he cried "Well, that's damned funny." I next handed him the record<sup>1</sup> of the sitting on January 9 (also typewritten).

When Mr. Davis had finished reading the records, we set about the business of discussing them point by point, and when we had carefully examined the room and the room downstairs, and also the outside of the house and its surroundings, we repaired to Mr. Davis' office on the Midland Railway approach, where Mr. Davis keeps his personal diaries. It was obviously important for us to find out, if possible, what Mr. Davis was doing at the exact hours when his spirit was supposed to be communicating. With regard to this matter we were extremely fortunate. For several years Mr. Davis has kept a detailed record of his daily doings, the precise hours at which he gives interviews to clients, etc. We were, therefore, able to learn exactly what Mr. Davis was doing at the time of both sittings. I questioned Mr. Davis (who was keenly interested) on every aspect of the case that occurred to me, taking notes of everything he said. I next propose to exhibit in a tabular form Mr. Davis' statements together with any corresponding data obtained at the sittings in 1922. Each statement has been carefully scrutinised by Mr. Davis and its accuracy endorsed.

#### TABULAR ANALYSIS OF THE EVIDENCE.

##### *Extracts from Mr. Davis' Diary.*

January 4, 1922. Arrived at the office in Southend at 9.30 a.m. by train from London. (Mr. and Mrs. Davis

<sup>1</sup>At his interview with Mr. Salter on September 19, 1925 (see Appendix B), Mr. Davis in my presence confirmed the fact that all the information concerning the description of the house, besides that which related to himself and family, was read by him from type-scripts on the evening of April 8th, and further, that these type-scripts contained no written matter whatever.—S. G. S.

were living in London at the time of the sitting, but Mr. Davis had an Estate Office in Southend, and travelled to business every day.) 11 to 11.45 a.m., interview with Mr. Short at Marine Parade (Marine Parade is an extension of the Eastern Esplanade which was to be Mr. Davis' future home).

January 6, 1922. Inspected for the first time the house at 54 Eastern Esplanade—interview with Mr. Sidney Playle (an old friend of Mr. Davis).

January 9, 1922, 3.30 p.m. Interviewed (a client) Mrs. Browning.

November 23, 1922. Visited the house on the Eastern Esplanade to make an estimate for repairs.

December 13, 1922. Moved into the house on the Eastern Esplanade.

[Note.—The above record shows, that at the time (January 6) of the interval between sittings on January 4 and January 9, Mr. Davis was occupying his thoughts with his future house in the Eastern Esplanade. It is interesting to note that at the sitting on January 4, before Mr. Davis had visited the house, the letter "E" indicating the name of the street was given, but that the detailed description of the interior of the house was not forthcoming until the sitting on January 9, i.e. until Mr. Davis had seriously begun to direct his thoughts towards the house. It is also rather curious that at the time of the first sitting on January 4, Mr. Davis should have been in the Marine Parade which is quite close to the house in the Esplanade.

We should also note the coincidence of Mr. Davis' interview with his friend Playle on January 6, and the mention of Playle as a school friend on January 4.]

*The Personnel of Mr. Davis' Family.*

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCENO. <sup>1</sup>	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
Mr. Davis was married before 1920. He has one child, a boy aged five years.	7 and 7a 51	<u>The sitter did not know that Mr. Davis was married or anything of his children.</u> <sup>2</sup>
We always call the little boy "Kiddie" and <u>never use the expressions, "my son" or "my boy."</u>	7a	At the time of the first visit I did not see the little boy as he was in bed.
My wife is passionately fond of flowers. <u>There never passes a week but I bring her flowers.</u> She is fairly fond of the country.	51a 51b	Flowers were very much in evidence in the drawing room; <u>more so than in most houses.</u>

*Mannerisms of Speech.*

<u>People have often remarked that my accent is very marked.</u> They think it is a little pedantic, but it is really quite natural.	7	This is noted in record of sitting on January 4.
The phrases " <u>the dead to the living, queer world—what</u> " followed by an expression of concern for my wife and kiddie are quite characteristic. <u>I should first see the humorous aspect and then revert to seriousness.</u>	7a	

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of my meeting with Mr. Davis in the train he was *not* married, and he informs me that at that time he had no prospects or thoughts of marriage.—S. G. S.

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE No.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<u>I am constantly using the expressions, "Old chap" and "Old man."</u>	25	Before I showed Mr. Davis my record he had used the phrase "Old man" twice and "Old chap" once.
<u>The word "confab" is frequently used by me. I often say "we'll have a little confab" on something or other.</u>	21a	Such phrases as "That help you," "Remember our last little talk," are characteristic of Mr. Davis. <i>He says it's his way to omit</i> the opening "Do you" or "Does that."
The expression " <u>confound the names</u> " I should use in the company of women. Otherwise I should more likely say, " <u>Damn the names.</u> " I have a very bad memory for names but a very good one for faces.	13a	

[*Note.*—It is important to notice that the Gordon Davis who purports to speak at this sitting does not seem to be the Gordon Davis whom I knew as a boy at school, but the Gordon Davis of 1916. The accent, mannerisms, etc., reproduced at the sitting do not remind me of the Gordon Davis I knew at school, but of the later Gordon Davis whom I met as a cadet. It is rather curious that even while "Davis" is reverting to his past life as a boy, he uses expressions of quite modern currency like "Brighter Geography." I doubt if this particular phrase was in use even in 1916, the time of my meeting with Gordon Davis.

S. G. S.]

*Incidents connected with Rochford.*

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p>I was much impressed by the remark "<u>How I always argued with Histed.</u>" I was keenly interested at school in everything connected with geography. I often remember raising discussions in class with Mr. Histed.</p>	<p>13 13a 13b</p>	<p>I remembered that Gordon Davis used to argue during geography lessons.</p>
<p>The reference to <u>harpoons</u> is connected with my great hobby. All my life since I was a small boy, <u>I have collected weapons of various kinds</u>—especially spears, boomerangs, etc.</p>	<p>13b</p>	<p><u>In the hall</u> of Mr. Davis' house there is a <u>large collection of spears and other savage weapons.</u></p>
<p>I fully understand the remark that I was "for brighter geography." I well remember how the master, Mr. Histed, when about to give a lesson on Australia asked me to bring a boomerang. On another occasion he said, "bring along that poisoned spear of yours from the Sandwich Islands." I gave a lecture to the class on this and I remember being a little "funky" because I knew the spear was poisoned.</p>	<p>13a 13b</p>	<p>I cannot remember him bringing the spears to school but it is a thing I have probably forgotten.</p>
<p><u>I recognised at once the word "Malt" as the name of the house in which I lived as a boy in Rochford 25 years ago.</u> This house has the malting</p>	<p>17</p>	<p><u>To the best of my knowledge I never knew where Gordon Davis lived at Rochford.</u></p>

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p>at its back and was often called "The Malting."</p> <p>It has a little porch in front which we called the "verandah," but <u>the description in the sitting does not apply to this house or to any house in which I have lived except the house in Eastern Esplanade.</u></p> <p>I do not think I should have forgotten the name of my master Histed, but note that in the sitting I got the syllable "Hs."</p> <p><u>Playle is a name of an old friend of mine at Rochford.</u> It is a family name at Rochford and there were Playles went to school when I did. I recognise the word "Over" immediately as an attempt to give the name "<u>Overell</u>," the name of a boy who attended school with myself.<sup>1</sup> He was not a friend of mine, but he</p>	13	<p>I had no occasion ever to visit his house and only had the slightest acquaintance with him. It is, of course, in the case of an isolated fact like this, difficult to be certain that I had not learnt it in some normal way as a boy and forgotten it.</p> <p>Mr. Davis has had no experience of psychic research and knows nothing of the difficulties in transmitting names.</p> <p><u>I did not know that "Playle" was a special friend of Gordon Davis, but knew the name.</u></p> <p><u>Cliff Overell was a great friend of mine at school</u></p>

<sup>1</sup>I have since learned from Mrs. Overell that the eldest Overell boy (Leonard Overell) often spoke at home of Gordon Davis. In the above statement G. D. is probably thinking of "Cliff" Overell, who was certainly not a friend of his.—S. G. S.

MR DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p>came from the same part as Mr. Soal, namely Doggets, and I would naturally associate him with Mr. Soal since they came to school together. Moreover, the two families Overell and Playle were friends.</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>and we lived quite close together. Playle was <i>not</i> a friend of mine and <u>I did not know he was a friend of Gordon Davis.</u></p>

*The Incident of a Meeting in the Train.*

<p>I can recall my last meeting with Mr. Soal. It was on Shenfield Station when I was returning to my Cadet Corps at Berkhamstead from leave. I well remember talking about guard duties. In our Corps, they were mad on the subject, and paid more attention to it than to anything else, for we were told that the efficiency of a battalion depends on its guards. The expression "confab" is one which I should use.</p> <p>I remember lecturing to my brother cadets on guard duties.</p>	<p>21 21a 22</p>	<p>I remember that Mr. Davis told me on the train that he had been detailed to give a lecture on the duties of the guard.</p>
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*Description of the House at No. 54 Eastern Esplanade.*

<p>The house is part of a large block.</p>	<p>58</p>	<p>Verified by S. G. S. Statement at Sitting is "<u>joined up to others</u>"</p>
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MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE No.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
The houses are all on one side of the street. The other side is open to the sea.	58a	This therefore would answer the description of " <u>half a street</u> "
Name of the street is Eastern Esplanade.	26 26a 60	In 26a Nada mentions two " <u>E's</u> " as <u>giving the address of the wife</u> . In 60 the two " <u>E's</u> " are definitely stated to be the name of the street.
The curious passage-way between the doors of Nos. 54 and 55 in this street could be accurately described as " <u>a funny dark tunnel</u> ," "it's to do with his house." This passage-way, which is very dark, is from 15 to 20 feet long, and leads from the street to the back of the premises. There are two or three similar tunnels at intervals in the same block.	38 38a (see <u>photo</u> )	I was much impressed by the appearance of <u>this passage-way</u> . I do not remember having seen a similar tunnel in South-end.
Opposite the house <u>on the other side of the street is a seaside shelter with seats all round, which would give the idea of a verandah</u> . It is situated exactly opposite the gate of No. 54.	56a 56b	I have noticed that this shelter is precisely opposite the gateway to No. 54 and the statement " <u>something that is not in front of the</u>
No. 54 has six steps, the bottom one being very thin.	41	

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
		<p><u>other houses</u> ” would be appli- cable. Verified by S. G. S. Mr. Davis points out that there is actually a “ <u>verandah</u> ” round the roof of this structure.</p>



↑                    ↑  
*Steps.*            *Tunnel through house.*

PHOTOGRAPH OF MR. GORDON DAVIS' HOUSE  
showing front door with steps and passage to back-garden.

*The Interior of No. 54, Eastern Esplanade.*

<p>The drawing room is on the ground floor slightly raised above the level of the street. There are seven pictures hanging on the walls. Every</p>	46	<p>I myself was deceived by the two desert scenes I said, “<u>Surely that is sea.</u>”</p>
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MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p>picture is a picture of scenery. <u>With the exception of two desert scenes every picture contains mountains, or is a seascape.</u> In two or three pictures, mountains and sea are combined. The mountains are in the foreground in every case and not in the background. One of the pictures and only one is quite definitely a large picture of a road and a stream between two high hills or mountains. This is the sole subject of the picture. <u>The two desert scenes could easily be mistaken for seascapes owing to the bluish colouring of the empty expanses.</u></p>	<p>46a 46b 47 48 48a</p>	
<p>Two of the scenes were painted for Mr. Davis by the Artist Fred Whistock in the summer of 1924.</p>		<p>Mr. Davis showed me the receipt for the payment for these pictures dated August 27, 1924.</p>
<p>In the drawing room there is <u>one and only one large mirror above the mantelpiece.</u> This mirror extends from the ceiling right down to the mantelpiece.</p>	<p>46</p>	<p>Inspected by S.G.S.</p>
<p>There are five fairly large vases in the drawing room. <u>One is a Japanese vase with a curious lid.</u></p>	<p>50</p>	<p>Inspected by S.G.S. The Japanese vase did appear to me to have a curious top.</p>

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p>On the north wall of the drawing room are <u>two saucer-shaped china plaques</u>, about the size of large saucers.</p>	<p>50 50a</p>	<p>I should have unhesitatingly described these plaques as saucers. They resemble nothing so much.</p>
<p>The dining room is down a flight of steps in the basement below the level of the street. On the mantelshelf of this room one at each end are <u>two brass candlesticks</u>—ornaments, since the house is lighted by electricity. They are the only two brass candlesticks in the house.</p>	<p>54</p>	<p>I inspected these candlesticks which are of brass. <u>Nada's reference to "downstairs" is perfectly correct.</u></p> <p>The candlesticks were specimens of Elizabethan work and Mr. Davis thinks the "Drawing Room" would perhaps have been a better place for them than the room downstairs. Mr. Davis also told me that <u>he had bought the two candlesticks at an auction sale in Southend before the war.</u> In his London flat they stood on the mantelpiece in a bedroom.</p>
<p>So far as the pictures and candlesticks are concerned, none of these objects have been removed since summer of 1924.</p>		

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
<p><u>All the seascapes were obtained by me after the dates of the sittings.</u> The picture showing the road between the mountains, I obtained in Ireland in the year 1920. <u>The candlesticks were in my possession before the sittings.</u></p> <p>Previous to the evening of April 8, Mr. Soal had never been in my house. He had never met my wife and child until the same evening. No letters have ever been exchanged between Mr. Soal and myself.</p> <p><u>The description of the house and its interior would not apply to any house in which I have ever lived except the house in the Eastern Esplanade, but this house fits the description admirably.</u></p>	63	<p>On my first visit to Mr. Davis' house on April 8, by a curious oversight I entirely overlooked the statement concerning "<u>black dicky bird on piano,</u>" and it was not until I reached his office later in the evening that I remembered to mention it. Mr. Davis then informed me that <u>he had in his possession a small ornament in the form of a kingfisher which stood on a black china pedestal.</u> At the time of my visit it was actually standing in a plant-pot on the piano and, owing to its being almost hidden inside the plant-pot, had escaped my notice. The</p>

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
		<p>china pedestal on which the bird stood was provided with holes for holding flowers, and when in use the ornament stood in the centre of a bowl of flowers on the window-sill. <u>When not required for holding flowers the bird and pedestal were removed from the bowl and stood sometimes in the plant-pot on the piano.</u> The bird, Mr. Davis says, has been on and off the piano ever since he moved into the Southend house. The bird itself is not more than 3 or 4 inches high; <u>it is not black but might seem black from a distance.</u> The</p>

MR. DAVIS' STATEMENT.	REFER- ENCE NO.	REMARKS BY S. G. S.
		<p>pedestal is quite black.</p> <p>A week or so later Mr. Davis informed me that he had bought the bird at Upton Park in the year 1921 when he was living in London. In the London flat it did not stand on the piano but was packed away with other ornaments as there was no room for it.</p> <p>S. G. SOAL.</p>

I have carefully read the foregoing record, and checked off the various statements and descriptions therein contained, and made any alterations necessary.

This matter is extremely surprising to me, as I have never dabbled in anything to do with psychic science. However, as this affair is particularly interesting to those who study these matters, I shall be pleased to answer any query or question that may be put to me.

GORDON C. DAVIS.

*April 9, 1925.*

STATEMENT BY MR. C. W. SOAL.

SCRATTON LODGE,  
BROOK ROAD,  
PRITTLEWELL,  
ESSEX.

*April 9, 1925.*

I followed the records of my brother's sittings with Mrs. Cooper during the years 1921-22 with great interest, and remember reading week by week the instalments of the cases of Ferguson and James Miles, copies of which my brother sent me to Cambridge. The case of Gordon Davis I remember reading in the vacation of Christmas, 1921. This I read from the green books in which my brother wrote his original records. I have this morning compared his typescript with the records in those books and find them accurate and in order. I can recall most of the details of the description of Gordon Davis' house and have a distinct recollection that some-time during the summer of 1920 my brother told me that he had heard that Gordon Davis was dead. I never knew Gordon Davis personally. I have also, as far as possible, compared the typescript of Section 1 with the records in the green books and find them accurate.

C. W. SOAL.

ANALYSIS OF THE EVIDENCE.

A study of the foregoing records would appear to establish with reasonable certainty the following facts:

1. The communicator was able to give accurately, facts about the past life of Gordon Davis. Some of these facts were known to the sitter; others were not, e.g. the name of the old house in Rochford.

2. The communicator reproduced the characteristic mannerisms, accent, etc., of the living person. These we must consider to be, in a certain sense, also *facts* about the life of Gordon Davis, even although they are expressed in a dramatic form. We must beware of supposing that such facts are essentially different from the other class of

facts represented by incidents in the life of the deceased person.

3. The communicator gave accurate descriptions of the environment and interior of the house which he and his wife and child were to occupy a year later. The question arises, however, could the living Gordon Davis on the day when he first visited the house have formed in his mind, consciously or subconsciously, an idea of what its interior arrangement was to be like? The evidence seems to show that he could not by any normal process of thought. Though the kingfisher was in his possession he could scarcely have known that it was to stand on the piano. He informs me that his wife did not visit the house with him on January 6, and that when she did visit the house some months later she was for some time undecided whether the living room should be in the basement or on the ground floor. It is, therefore, highly improbable that Gordon Davis or his wife could have come to any decision by January 9, 1922, conscious or unconscious, that the two brass candlesticks in their possession were to stand "on a shelf downstairs" (54). Mr. Davis told me further that when he visited the house on January 6, 1922, he was not thinking at all about how it would look when his furniture was transferred into it. He says his chief preoccupation at the time was in planning how to get it clean. At that time the house was not empty, but occupied by tenants and in a dirty condition. Moreover, the pictures on the walls were as different as possible from the present selection and consisted mainly of cheap prints. Mr. Davis also said that at the time of taking over the house he had no particular predilection for "sea-scapes" but that he had always liked water-colours. He acquired the sea-scapes fortuitously and not through any special love for this kind of picture. These facts are important in helping us to a conclusion as to whether or not there was *true* pre-vision in this case or not. If I make the statement that there will be an eclipse of the sun on January 14, 1926, that is in a certain sense an act of pre-vision. In the last analysis this kind of scientific pre-vision is not more explicable than the kind of pre-

vision which one meets with in psychic research. There is, however, this essential difference. When I predict an eclipse of the sun, I base my prediction on hypotheses which have been tested and found to work again and again. I have, therefore, a certain degree of intellectual control over the phenomena which I predict, although I have no practical control. In the case when a psychic predicts the death of a certain person, he does not consciously follow any well-tested rationale and he does not know how his unconscious mind arrives at its results. It does not follow, however, that the unconscious mind does not follow a definite rationale in arriving at its conclusions. If we knew the nature of the hypotheses upon which the subconscious mind works, it might perhaps be possible to predict events in the lives of human beings with as much certainty as the astronomer shows when he predicts the return of Halley's comet. The two kinds of pre-vision may, therefore, not really differ in the last analysis. What we have to make sure of in this case, however, is whether the kind of pre-vision employed is of the scientific or of the psychic variety. We know that just two days before the house was described by the psychic the living Gordon Davis was occupying his conscious mind with it. He had visited it and gained knowledge of its environment and interior. Certain articles, such as the brass candlesticks and the picture of the mountain road, the saucers and the vases, were already in his possession. Certain tastes, such as a taste for water-colours, were in his possession. The bird also belonged to him. But could he have arrived at the knowledge that the bird would most probably stand on the piano and that no single *portrait picture* would be hanging on his walls in the next few years? Could he have known that the two brass candlesticks were to stand in the downstairs room and not in the upstairs room? If these questions are answered in the affirmative then we have a case of ordinary or scientific pre-vision; if in the negative, it is a case of pure psychic pre-vision.

In a discussion after the present paper was read before the Society it was suggested by Dr. V. J. Woolley that

the case of "Gordon Davis" might be somewhat simplified by assuming that the pre-*vising agent was the sitter and not the mind of Gordon Davis.* Dr. Woolley suggests, in fact, that telepathy from Gordon Davis did not play any real part in the affair, but that when the future house was described the sitter was unconsciously pre-*vising,* not an event in the life of Gordon Davis, but an event in his own life, i.e. his visit to the house on April 8, 1925. The sitter, therefore, saw the objects at the sitting as they appeared on the day of his future visit. This theory would clearly require us to assume that all the information given at the sittings about the past of Gordon Davis was the sitter's own normally acquired knowledge and not derived by any telepathy from Gordon Davis. Incidents like the address at the "Malting" we should have to assume were scraps of information once normally acquired by the sitter and now forgotten. Further, it would be necessary to suppose that the fairly close coincidence in time between the date of the sittings and the date, January 6, on which Mr. Davis first visited the house was due purely to chance. Again, the mention of "Playle" at the sitting and Mr. Davis' visit to his friend Playle two days later must also be attributed to chance. It will be remembered that on my visit to the house on April 8 I saw Mrs. Davis but not the little boy, who was in bed at the time. It would therefore be necessary to suppose that the pre-vision of the things in the house not only extended to the things which the sitter saw but also to the *substance of his conversation with Mr. Davis.* Again, the expression "kiddie" applied to the little boy—an expression which was invariably used by Mr. and Mrs. Davis—must have been either the result of a lucky guess or of a pre-vision of the future conversation of Gordon Davis with the sitter. Mr. Davis himself has expressed the opinion that the reproduction of mannerisms, mental attitudes, etc., are far too accurate to be attributed to the single half-hour's conversation which the sitter had with him in the train.

It may be added that if we care to push such theories of pre-vision to their ultimate conclusion they may be

called upon to "explain" almost any psychic fact. Almost any piece of information given by a medium and afterwards verified by the sitter might be thought of as a pre-vision by the sitter of the moment in his life when he comes to verify the fact! I do not, however, suppose that Dr. Woolley or any other student would be prepared to go as far as that. But if pre-vision is to be accepted as a fact in psychic research, it does not seem possible in the present stage of our knowledge to set any very precise limits to its scope.

## APPENDIX A.

IN my presence on April 22, 1925, Walter Valentine at my request wrote out the following corroborative statements. The words are his own but now and then I helped him to spell a word and to express a sentence more grammatically. But in no case did I suggest any alteration of the *sense* of what he intended to say.

S. G. SOAL.

GT. STAMBRIDGE,  
NR. ROCHFORD,  
ESSEX.

April 22, 1925.

1. Mr. Soal came to see me to-day to ask questions about his brother Frank. He asked me "Do you remember the hut at the top of the big tree?" I said "Yes, very well." He asked "What could you see from the top?" I said at once "The white sails of the yachts on the river Crouch; we could see them quite plain." Only a few weeks ago when walking with my wife I showed her the tree where we had the hut and told her you could see the sails from the top.

2. I remember giving Mr. Soal the question about "What did we have to eat on the day when we walked from Fambridge Ferry to Creeksea Ferry?" Mr. Soal wrote on his paper "Samphire and Swedes." I wrote on my paper "We ate Swedes." We took nothing with us and were out all day. We were so tired we could hardly drag ourselves home. I can't remember eating any Samphire. I remember the Swedes were in a field near Lion's Creek. We had nothing else to eat till we got home.

3. I remember Frank and me catching a big eel in the moat. We set the line at night and when we found the eel at the end of it we got very excited.

4. I can remember making the questions for Mr. Soal 4 years ago and the one about "What did I (Walter Valentine) do when Pat was sitting in the hut when I did something and made him angry?" What I did was to throw a sharp hemlock stalk with an elder head on the end through the hedge and it hit Pat on the cheek and Pat was very angry. It made Pat's face bleed. I often used to kick the water tin on to the fire for fun, but I can't remember doing it when Pat was sitting over the fire, though I may have done.

5. I remember the fire we had just outside the stable door. It was in a brick fireplace and just about nesting time. "Starbobs" is a common word for starlings round here among boys. There were a lot of starlings in the thatch of the barn. We sometimes caught them. I can't remember the fire driving the starlings out of the thatch but the fire was only a yard or two from the barn and under the eaves. Only Frank and me were there.

6. I remember Frank shooting rats with a bow and arrow on the moat. I can remember the bow was made of nut wood and the arrow had a six-inch wire nail tied tightly on the end.

I remember once how the head of the arrow passed through a rat's back and pinned it to the bank, holding it there.

[Signed] WALTER VALENTINE.

## APPENDIX B.

## STATEMENT BY MR. W. H. SALTER.

By arrangement with Mr. S. G. Soal I visited Mr. Gordon Davis' house, No. 54 Eastern Esplanade, Southend, on September 19, 1925, and was kindly shown by Mrs. Davis the room apparently described in the sittings and also the downstairs room where the brass candlesticks are. The row of houses, of which No. 54 is one, is of a very unusual construction, quite unlike the general type prevalent at Southend or, as far as I know, elsewhere, owing to the peculiar effect of the "tunnel" between each pair of houses, flanked on each side by five full steps and a half step leading to the front door.

I also observed that the sea-side shelter to which Mr. Davis refers is directly in front of his house, and that the only other one of the kind on this part of the sea-front was at some distance away.

I confirm Mr. Soal's and Mr. Davis' description of the pictures and other ornaments in the house, except that the two desert scenes mentioned appear to have been moved to another room.

Mr. Soal and I then called on Mr. Davis at his office, and he showed me the entries in his diary, and fully confirmed Mr. Soal's statements as to their previous acquaintanceship, his lack of interest in psychical matters, and the circumstances under which he became interested in No. 54 Eastern Esplanade. I confirm the statement in the footnote on p. 571.

Mr. Soal also showed me the old Rectory where he formerly lived, and pointed out the scenes of various incidents mentioned in the earlier parts of his paper.

APPENDIX C.

[LETTER FROM THE KEEPER OF THE SOUTH NECROPOLIS,  
GLASGOW.]

SOUTHERN NECROPOLIS (CENTRAL AND EASTERN DIVISIONS).

316 CALEDONIA ROAD, GLASGOW,  
19th January, 1922.

S. G. SOAL, Esq.

SIR,

At your request I have gone through the book from year 1890 till 1920, and enclosed please find list of all the John Fergusons therein noted. There is no trace of AMY Ferguson during these years as far as I can trace.

This is all the information I can supply you with as far as my books are concerned.

Yours truly,

JAMES ANDERSON,  
*Supt.*

The detailed list enclosed with this letter can be consulted at the S.P.R. Rooms, should any one wish to examine it.

## APPENDIX D.

It has been suggested by Miss Gertrude Tubby in a letter to Mrs. Sidgwick that an inmate of the Brentwood Mental Institution might have been responsible for the communications in the "John Ferguson" case. Miss Tubby suggested (a) that there might at the time of the sitting have been an inmate, living or dead, whose real name was or had been John Ferguson, or (b) an inmate, living or dead, who imagined or had imagined his name to be John Ferguson (which is the name of a character in a well-known play).

I wrote therefore to the Medical Superintendent of the Brentwood Mental Institution and received the following reply which effectively disposes of Miss Tubby's suggestions.

BRENTWOOD MENTAL HOSPITAL,  
BRENTWOOD, ESSEX,  
*July 18, 1925.*

Mr. S. G. SOAL,  
SCRATTON LODGE,  
BROOK ROAD, PRITTLEWELL,  
ESSEX.

DEAR SIR,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th instant, and to inform you that there has never been a patient of the name of John Ferguson in this Mental Hospital. As far as I can ascertain, there has not been a patient with a false idea that his name was "John Ferguson."

Yours faithfully,

[Signed] M. ROBINSON,  
*Medical Superintendent*