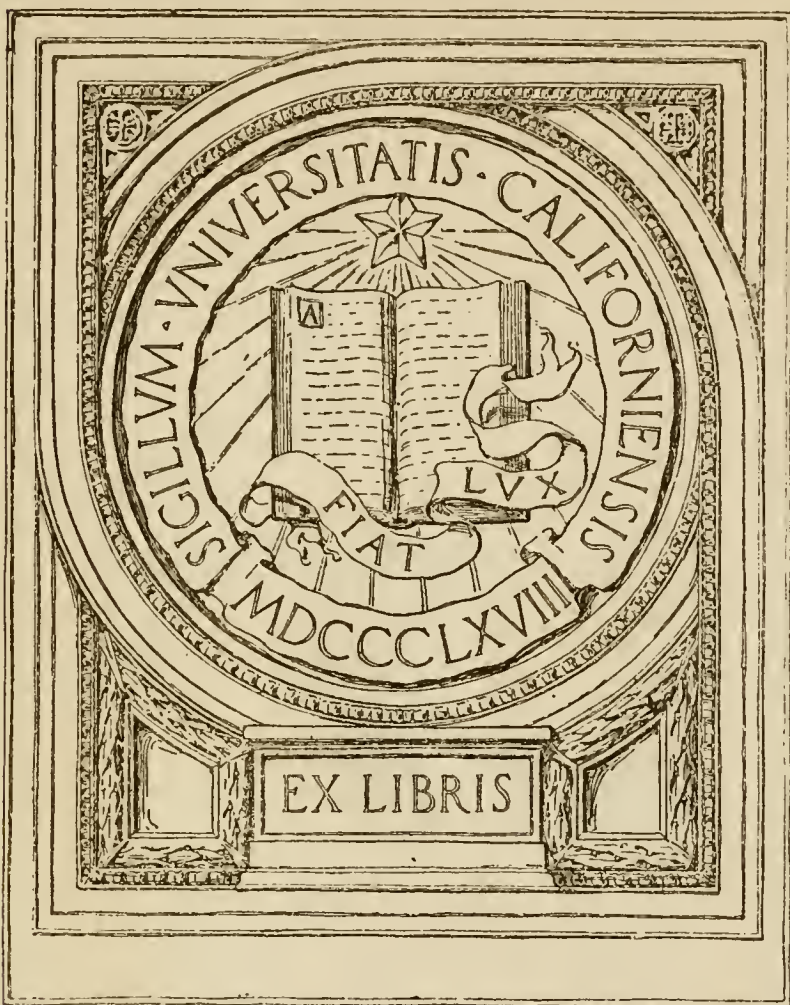




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PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

THE OCCULT INFLUENCE OF JEWELS
AND MANY OTHER THINGS

BY

M. MAC DERMOT CRAWFORD

Author of

"THE SAILOR WHOM ENGLAND FEARED"
"THE WIFE OF LA FAYETTE," ETC.

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Charles Darwin

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P R E F A C E

THESE stories, excepting the historical ones for which, of course, I cannot vouch, may claim one merit: that of being true, most of them having been related to me by those whose actual experiences they are. That no names are used is the wish of the many who have helped me, so I can only thank my friends and my friends' friends for their kindness, and hope these peeps into the psychic world will prove as interesting to others as they have been to me.

Hallow E'en, 1915.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ON THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS AND MANY OTHER THINGS	1
II. PEEPS AT PAST LIVES	47
III. ON PRESENTIMENT	65
IV. FROM THE OTHER SIDE	91
V. INVISIBLE HELPERS	109
VI. DREAMS	121
VII. ON RE-INCARNATION	135
VIII. ON REPERCUSSION	151
IX. FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT	171
X. SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES	189



CHAPTER I

ON THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS AND MANY OTHER THINGS

THE superstition that certain jewels attract misfortune to their owners is so rarely questioned that it has become an accepted belief, and, to opals especially, this taint of ill-luck clings. This is a superstition of comparatively recent date, if—as it is said—the idea grew out of Sir Walter Scott's novel, "Anne of Geierstein."

In this story, the grandmother of the beautiful Anne appears mysteriously in the castle, where she was sent to instruct Anne's grandfather in such light studies as philosophy and occult sciences, which were prevalent at that time—and afterwards married her pupil!

The lovely lady, known as Hermione the Persian, "wore no turban or head-dress of any kind, saving a blue riband drawn through

her auburn hair, and secured by a gold clasp, the outer side of which was ornamented by a superb opal, which, amid the changing light peculiar to that gem, displayed internally a slight tinge of red like a spark of fire.”

Day and night she wore the stone which seemed full of mysterious and supernatural light as if reflecting the moods of the wearer, for it glowed brilliantly when she ran, danced, or was happy, growing dull and lifeless when she sorrowed. It was said by her maids that she removed the riband only when having her hair dressed, and during this time they always noticed she was extremely quiet and pensive. She was never parted from it at other times, even wearing the stone while she slept, “and was very apprehensive when any liquid was brought near it.”

Of course there was a baroness in the tale whose *penchant* for pedigree was not satisfied when the beautiful—though unexplained—Persian carried off the *parti* of the county, and bided her time to make trouble.

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

On the day when the infant daughter of the Baron and Baroness von Arnheim—the latter being the Persian lady—was to be christened, a stately procession stepped through the halls of the castle to the chapel, at the door of which arose a discussion concerning precedence, between the Countess Walderstetten and Baroness Steinfeldt, which, being decided by the host in favour of the former, the baroness departed in a violent temper, declaring she would not remain in a house “of which the master is a sorcerer and the mistress is a demon who dares not cross her brow with holy water.”

The Baron von Arnheim, furious at this occurrence, instantly challenged all the men present to defend the baroness’s words if they believed her insinuations to be true, but no one accepted the challenge, and the baron “declared that all present should be satisfied that his wife shared the rites of Christianity.” At this stage the Countess Walderstetten, formerly the chaperone of Hermione, was heard to whisper imploringly to her relative the baron :

“ Oh, be not rash ! try no experiments !

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

there is something mysterious about the opal talisman; be prudent and let the matter pass by!"

To this admonition the baron paid no attention, and as they approached the font containing the holy water, dipped his finger in it, "and, with an air of sportive familiarity which was rather unwarranted by the time and place, he flirted on her beautiful forehead a drop or two of the moisture which remained on his own hand. The opal, on which one of these drops had lighted, shot out a brilliant spark like a falling star, and became the instant afterwards lifeless and colourless as a common pebble, while the beautiful baroness sunk on the floor of the chapel with a deep sigh of pain."

There was great consternation, and the insensible Hermione was carried to her apartments, only being restored after a long time, and with great difficulty. On regaining consciousness she sent for her husband, and they had a long interview, the purport of which was never divulged. . . . The next morning there lay in the bed, where the beautiful young woman had been but a few

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

hours before, a little heap of ashes! So much for this tragic and mysterious history.

In the sunny days of Cleopatra and ancient Rome the opal was so highly prized as to rank next to the emerald, and Pliny asserts that the rich and powerful senator Monius was exiled by Mark Anthony for “the sake of his magnificent opal, the size of a hazel nut.”

These superstitions were not shared by Queen Victoria, for opals were among her favourite wedding presents; but to an imaginative person, the flashing fires in the delicately coloured harlequin stones, and their varying lights might easily be construed as evil and sullenly gleaming eyes. Personally, I am not superstitious, for those in my possession have, as yet, brought nothing but good luck. However, the following true story shows another side of the question.

Miss S——, a pretty girl, whose beauty was her sole dowry, became engaged to a man whom she had known and liked for some time. He was one of those on whom the gods had showered their favours, being blessed with this world's goods, and, among

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

other things, owned a fine string of polo ponies, being devoted to the game. He was a man of rather artistic tastes, and had, on his varying journeys, amassed all sorts of curios from every corner of the earth. From among these he chose a wonderful fire opal, picked up in Mexico, which he had set with diamonds and gave to his *fiancée* to bind their engagement. The stone had not been in his possession more than a few weeks when he became engaged.

Miss S—— may have shared the superstition with the rest of the world, but the beauty of the ring outweighed all other considerations, and she wore it joyously, busying herself with preparations for her marriage.

Then things began to happen which delayed the wedding. First her mother died, and there was talk of a very quiet wedding a few months later. Then the bride-elect was stricken down with typhoid, and hovered between life and death for weeks, but at last recovered, and the twice-postponed wedding day was again chosen. Then, three days before this, the

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

groom, while playing polo, was thrown from his pony, breaking three ribs and a collar-bone, and sustaining a severe concussion from being dragged, so again there was no wedding. Indeed, it seemed far more likely that a funeral would take its place, for he lay in a critical condition for a long and anxious time. Finally he recovered, and the wedding was again on the *tapis*, and, strange as it may seem, this time they were married, and the ill-luck seemed to have spent itself, for nothing happened for over a year. They were living at this time in the far West, in San Francisco, so the last chapter of accidents was planned to be as glowingly sensational as the most skilled novelist could desire. One night in April of the year 1906 the world was shocked by the dreadful tidings of earthquake and fire which ravaged the hilly city of the Pacific, and through the worst of it all, over ruined streets, through falling *débris*, fleeing before the fire over broken pavements where no horse-drawn vehicle could pass, was carried on an improvised stretcher young Mrs. D—— with her hour-old infant in her arms !

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

The surprising thing is that neither mother nor child suffered any harm from their wild adventures, but almost everything they had was lost for ever in the sweeping flames that tore and raged for days. The opal ring, along with other jewels, had not been with them on the night of the fire, and reposed carefully in another part of the country. I cannot tell why Mrs. D—— came to the decision of parting with it, for women are sentimental over such things as engagement rings, but part with it she did, and so far as one knows, misfortune seems to have ceased to dog their footsteps. The history of the opal would be tremendously interesting if it could be traced, for so many things in Mexico can be ascribed to the Aztecs, and hints of their gorgeous barbarian sacrifices and ceremonial furnish absorbing reading. They had their good and their wicked gods, and the malefic influence of one of the latter may have cast a spell over the uncanny jewel which had been reft from the eye of the hideous, squat idol by the hand of the looter, long ere the white race trod the soil of Mexico . . . or it may

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

have borne the curse of a jealous woman to poison the life of others with its undying venom, who knows ?

It is strange how all histories of jewels seem to run to ill-luck. Is there no jewel which brings happiness ? Every one is familiar with the famous " Hope " diamond and its far-reaching misfortunes, and there are endless stories of the same nature, which may, or may not, be true ; but of good-luck-bringing jewels there is a dearth. I know of one incident which gives cause for thought if nothing else, and it is not hearsay.

A lady, married many years ago, had a magnificent diamond cross given her by her husband as a wedding gift. It was of great value, and she wore it day and night, or, really, slept with it under her pillow, and during the day it was fastened inside her dress. Her husband was a Roman Catholic, and going to Rome shortly after her marriage, they had audience of the Pope, and the cross was blessed. Though not a Catholic herself, she always said the blessing brought her luck, which was true, for fortune seemed to smile on everything she attempted.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

The years went on, and one day, for some reason, she decided not to wear the cross, which she took off and put away in a jewel-case. That night she fell downstairs and hurt herself severely, though not dangerously. So, rather laughing at her superstition, she resumed wearing the jewel the following morning. Some years after, for a trivial reason, she again laid the ornament aside. That afternoon she was crossing her bedroom, with a young baby in her arms, and on nearly reaching the bed to lay the infant down, she caught her foot against a large case containing silver, which was kept under the bed, and which had been left sticking out. Taken unexpectedly, she had only time to throw herself violently backwards, falling heavily, sidewise on the floor, by which she saved the child, who otherwise would probably have been killed by striking its head on the foot of the heavily carved bedstead with its high, upstanding ornaments.

She was badly shaken up, and her knees were black and blue for weeks, for, in her effort to save the baby, she had given herself

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

a bad fall. So, yielding to superstition, she again wore the cross, and for many years nothing happened to her. She is dead now, after a long and painful illness, and the odd part is, that on talking with her daughter, and the maid who had been with her a lifetime, I learned that owing to her growing very stout she had not worn the cross for over two years before her death, laying it aside almost at the time her dreadful illness commenced, though no one knew it. I wonder if this is a coincidence, and if she ever thought of it?

Many virtues were attributed to the emerald, which possessed great medicinal and healing powers, being a sure preventive of epilepsy. It assisted women in childbirth, drove away evil spirits, and preserved the chastity of the wearer! Probably because of its charming and refreshing green colour it was declared beneficial to the eyes, and Nero constantly carried, as an eye-glass, or something corresponding to the "quizzing glass" of the dandies, a magnificent specimen of the stone, which was supposed to aid his sight.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Delving into the origin of charms and amulets, we find primitive man fashioning in clay, and hanging on his person little images of birds or beasts, which he believed brought him luck. As time went on, these objects, copied in better and more durable material, survived the wearer, to be found in the tombs of Egypt and the graves of prehistoric man, though the special virtue attached to each is lost to us.

The "lucky pig," so popular a decade ago, and worn in all sorts of precious stones, owes its origin to Mme. de Pompadour, whose favourite charm, a large ruby, in the form of a pig, is still to be seen in the Musée du Louvre; and the sale of match-boxes, shaped like this cheerful animal, is one of the chief features of the Hotel des Réservoirs, at Versailles, where in olden times this intriguing lady dwelt and held her court.

The name of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette has been blazoned to the ends of the earth for her share in the terrible scandal of the *collier de la reine*. Victim of circumstance, plaything of fate as she was, so artfully did calumny draw the thread, that the

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

guiltless queen was surrounded in a mesh from which even her truth and innocence could not extricate her.

That the necklace was destined to adorn the beautiful Jeanne du Barri we all know, also, that the royal lover died ere the extravagant lady got her clutches on the ornament. Novel and play have familiarised us with the story of the jeweller's despair and his offering the gems to the young queen, who heroically refused the gift, that the money might be spent on a new ship for the royal navy ; and the train of circumstances which led to the final disgraceful scandal—but who can tell anything of the origin of the stones themselves ? The doting Louis gave *carte blanche*, and the East was scoured to deck the powerful mistress. Knowing the methods prevalent in eastern lands, where a stab in the dark and a splash in a convenient pool dispense with unnecessary formalities in change of ownership, the acquisition of many of these stones must not be too closely questioned. Such stones as formed that famous “Queen's necklace” were not without their history, nor was that history

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

free from crime, intrigue, and romance. The various "Lights of the Harem" and "Pearls of the Dawn" were not given to yielding their treasures lightly, and as they themselves were but chattels of their lords, they could not sell openly what did not belong to them. Consequently, the stones in that ill-starred ornament represented a mass of intrigue, malice and emotions strong enough to bring misfortune on any innocent woman, and at that moment it was the one slight touch needed to send the tottering monarchy on its crashing downfall.

In Persia and the East generally the turquoise ranked as a luck-bringing stone, and was much used for garnishing the handles of daggers, helmets, and the trappings of horses. It is worn as an amulet, and engraved with passages from the Koran, the incised characters being inlaid with gold wire. With this stone is associated the superstition that its varying colour indicates the state of the wearer's emotions and health, and some people are unable to wear turquoises at all, as they shortly lose their exquisite blue, turning a dirty, dingy

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

green. I know of an instance, where the jeweller obligingly changed the large stone in a ring time after time, believing the turquoise to be at fault, and some years later, the wearer—who was very partial to this gem, and had a large collection—found, to her horror, that all of them had changed colour! Why, no one could surmise, until an Armenian trinket seller asserted it to be a well-known fact that some people could “never wear turquoises, because of something in the blood.” The Romans were very partial to the turquoise, which Pliny described as resembling lapis lazuli, but paler, and more in colour like the “shallow sea.”

The superstition that coral frightens off evil spirits, runs so far into the past that its origin cannot be traced, and the Italian of to-day still clings to the belief that the little coral hand is a sure safeguard against the “evil-eye.”

From the Greeks we learn that the wearer of an amethyst could not become intoxicated, the name itself being derived from two Greek words meaning “not” and “to intoxicate,”

and he who drank wine out of a cup carved from the solid amethyst might indulge with impunity in his potations, for he was immune to ill-effect.

The Chinese class jade, with its beautiful translucent greens, among the semi-precious stones, and to it they ascribe almost supernatural qualities. In its efficacy against evil, even death, the lower classes firmly believe, and I have seen a young coolie calmly moving about on a narrow sill, six storeys up, washing windows; who, when warned of the danger, grinned, pointed to the jade bracelet on his arm, shook his head and replied:

“Heap-ee luck-ee. No can kill. Me fall him catchee,” and imperturbably went on with his occupation with a carelessness of danger or dizziness that was enough to make one’s head swim.

In a large portrait of the Dowager Empress of China painted some years ago, the imperial lady is represented with slender cases of jade several inches long protecting her fingernails, which, according to the custom of the Chinese nobility, are never cut, indicating

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

that their rank places them above the necessity of using their hands for any sort of labour.

There is a popular, and tremendously lucky Chinese amulet, a twin-character carved in jade, to which is given the suggestive name, "Sign of the Double Joy."

There was no nation in which jewels played a greater part than among the Aztecs, and the wonders of Montezuma's "Treasure of the World" thrilled the Court of Spain when reported by the expedition of Cortez. The Aztecs adorned their gods with lavish profusion, and one of these—a singularly repulsive being, who became intensely irritable unless three "smoking" human hearts on a golden platter constantly reposed before his shrine—wore a "great serpent composed of pearls wound round his hideous body, while around his neck hung innumerable jewelled hearts and precious stones carved in the shape of hearts," with which his votaries ceaselessly propitiated him.

The Spaniards who accompanied Cortez were enchanted at the peep they obtained—

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

by surreptitiously poking the plaster off an adjoining wall—at the “Treasure of the World,” for there was an unmatched emerald “nearly as broad as the palm of the hand of pyramidal shape, which those who had seen it thought could not be procured for any sum.”

If women attribute bad luck to certain jewels, they must believe in the misfortunes of the beautiful Queen Chachiuhnentzin.

Far, far away in the times when Mexico was a ruling power of a new world, a herald came to the Court of King Axaiacatzin, proclaiming that his master the King of Mexico sought a princess “to be his true and lawful wife, whose son might succeed to the inheritance.”

Now, out of the many princesses who were sent in response to this summons, the princess with the utterly unpronounceable name was chosen out of a host whose names were none the less complicated. Princess Chachiuhnentzin, being very young at this time, was given a separate palace, with squads of attendants, and surrounded with all the pomp and ceremony due to the

18

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

daughter of the great king, her father, her education—such as it was—not being overlooked.

But alas! “young as she was she was exceedingly artful and vicious,” and knowing that her word was absolute and final to her servants and slaves who dared not disobey her on pain of death, she soon began to yield to propensities that would not have been out of place in the great courtesans of old. As her fancy turned, she obeyed the impulse, and had her lovers brought to her. When she had tired of them, like Cleopatra and a certain queen of France, they were mercilessly killed, and—if the disappearance was noticed—suspicion never fell on the queen. But though she so easily disposed of her lovers, some sentimental impulse prompted her to have statues of the deceased carefully modelled and set up in her palace “where the number soon became so great as to nearly fill the apartment.”

To the not unnatural curiosity of the king, who, when he came to visit her was often puzzled by these wonderfully modelled, jewelled and richly dressed statues and

effigies, she replied they were her gods, “ and he, knowing how strict the Mexicans were in the worship of their false deities, believed her.”

But the queen, insolent in the impunity of her rank, began to grow careless, and for some reason allowed three of her lovers to live. They were Chicuhcoatl, Huirzilitzn, and Maxtla, “ one of whom was lord of Tesoyucan, and one of the grandees of the kingdom ; and the other two, nobles of high rank.”

On one of these three, the king, one fine day, happened to notice a heavy gold clasp studded with two superb emeralds, which he had but lately given to the queen to fasten her mantle, and, “ though he had no fear of treason on her part, he was surprised and could not dismiss the subject from his mind,” where the little germ of unrest grew and ripened. So he went that night to visit the queen’s apartments, where the attendants, knowing nothing of what was in the royal mind, said the queen was asleep, “ thinking that the king would go away as he usually did.” But the incident of the

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

emerald clasp rankled and he insisted on being admitted, and, scattering the frightened attendants like sheep, approached her bed, where the royal lady lay, wrapped in slumber. Much to his astonishment, on bending closer, he found the bed occupied by a figure resembling his queen, dressed in her garments, and wearing a wig exactly imitating the glossy black hair of which Chachihnentzin was inordinately vain ! The surprise of the Aztec monarch may be imagined, and there followed a bad quarter of an hour for the conniving attendants. The guard was summoned, the palace and premises searched for the queen, who was finally found, supping convivially with the three young lords who had not been put to death.

That recrimination followed goes without saying, the queen and her companions were put in confinement, the attendants thrown into prison, and the case referred "to the judges of the court."

The investigation uncovered a tremendous scandal, and the misdeeds of the amorous queen were proclaimed over the length and breadth of the land ; for the testimony of

the makers of the statues, those who had introduced the lovers into the palace, the assassins hired to kill the favourites, those who had hidden the bodies, and many others, could not be denied or refuted. The king was adamant, “and when the case had been sufficiently investigated he despatched ambassadors to the kings of Mexico and Tlaco-pan, giving them information of the event, and signifying the day on which the punishment of the queen and her accomplices was to take place; and likewise sent through the empire to summon all the lords to bring their wives and their daughters, however young they might be, to be witnesses of a punishment which he designed for a great example.”

Not to be thwarted in his idea of a real “Roman Holiday,” the king “declared truce with all his enemies and the neighbouring tribes and nations with whom he was at war,” so that every one, far and near, whether they wanted to or not, could have no reasonable excuse for stopping away from the spectacle he was preparing, and he must have been pleased and proud, for on

22

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

the day appointed for the execution, the city of Tezcucó could scarcely hold the joyous mobs that thronged from everywhere into the market-place.

History leaves us no details of what the unhappy queen wore as she submitted to the ignominy of executioner and *garrotte*, but it is not to be supposed the fatal emerald clasp appeared on this tragic occasion. The three young lords suffered the same fate, and to end the ghastly scene, and from the fact that they were of high rank, all the bodies were burned together, along with the countless number of statues which had played their part as Mexican gods, all of which, let us hope, satisfied the king's vengeance. But this was not all, for more than *two thousand* persons who had been accessories and accomplices to the queen were punished in a similar manner, being put to the *garrotte* and afterwards "buried in a pit made for the purpose in a ravine near a temple of the Idol of Adulterers."

The general public unquestionably enjoyed itself, and we read that "all applauded so severe and exemplary a punishment except

the Mexican lords, the relations of the queen, who were much incensed at so public an example, and, although for the present they concealed their resentment, meditating future revenge.”

Alas ! that the emeralds belonging to the Aztec queen failed in this instance to exercise one of the specific virtues attributed to them !

The Greeks and Romans grew so recklessly extravagant in their love for jewels, that Pliny declares he saw Lollio Paulina adorned with gems worth £322,916 13s. 4d., which is a tidy little sum for ordinary occasions. The Italians considered diamonds averted insanity and rendered poison harmless, and in the Middle Ages the stone was known by the—even to-day—not inappropriate name of *pietra della reconciliazone*, peace-maker between husband and wife !

To diamonds, perhaps more than other stones, cling romantic histories and poetic names. The “Mountain of Splendour” and the “Sea of Glory” belonging to Persia, while Russia, though lacking the flowery names of the East, had one in the imperial

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

sceptre of Catherine II valued at five millions sterling, to which is attached a history not lacking in incident. This diamond is said to have been one of the eyes of the idol at Malabar, renowned far and wide for its extraordinary brilliancy and beauty. This idol rejoiced in the name of Scheringham, and so widespread was its fame, that a French grenadier who had deserted from the Indian service determined to rob it. It was a long task, beset with innumerable obstacles and dangers, but the grenadier disguised himself, finally becoming one of the priests serving in the temple, where, watching his opportunity, he was able to rob the idol of its eye, fleeing instantly to Madras, where he sold the stone to the captain of a ship for the bagatelle of twenty thousand rupees! The captain sold it to a Jew for seventeen or eighteen thousand pounds, and, after passing through many hands at ever-rising prices, the Empress Catherine ordered it to be bought for one hundred and thirty-six thousand guineas.

There is an Egyptian lucky stone of multi-coloured effect, which is much prized, but

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

I have never heard the special virtues attributed to it, nor have I come across it more than once. The Egyptian fondness for amulets is well known, and to-day we believe in the luck-bringing powers of the "Ankh," which figures so largely in hieroglyphics as the symbol of resurrection.

In the heyday of Henry of Navarre's court men outvied women in their gorgeousness, and Bassompierre relates an incident where a cloth of gold suit had *fifty pounds* of pearls embroidered on to it! Though we consider pearls to mean tears, no such superstition kept the fair Gabrielle d'Estrées from wearing them, and when she entered Paris with her royal lover in 1594 was "covered with pearls and diamonds of such lustre that she dimmed the torches." But stay, perhaps the pearls worked their spell, for death soon came and she was thwarted in her ambition of wedding the King of France as he had promised. . . .

The elder Dumas wove a thrilling romance around Anne of Austria, Buckingham, and the famous diamond studs which the inimitable d'Artagnan brought at a gallop from

26

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

London, saving the reputation of the indiscreet queen, and repentant la Vallière leaves us her name attached to a graceful pendant.

There is—or was—a race in Peru, which boasted the horrible and secret art of converting the human eye into a stone, highly prized as a sure bringer of ill-luck, making an appropriate and gruesome present for the unwary. Some few still exist, though they are very rare, being described by those who have seen them as extraordinarily and uncannily fascinating objects, as the eye is preserved intact.

The cat's-eye, while artistically attractive, is lacking in historical interest, and little can be gathered as to any romance of early history connected with it. However, I know from personal experience that the following tale is true, and so the good or evil effects of the stone must be judged on its own merits.

A friend, deeply interested in all superstitions concerning jewels, said that her husband was one of those men who seem born with the proverbial golden spoon at hand to

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

minister to their wants. Everything he touched turned to money: if he bought land, it inevitably happened to be a piece that some one must have immediately at any price asked, shares in companies rose fabulously, and he never failed to back the right horse!

He constantly speculated in mining ventures, and it was from a friend, who had been able, through "inside information" to sell at the critical moment and realise a tidy fortune, that he received the first scarf-pin which appears in this story. It was a round stone, set in very tiny but brilliant diamonds, and though her husband hated jewellery, he took to this pin, which he wore so constantly that it became quite a joke among his friends. Luck still came his way, and then—she could not quite remember the circumstance—he had another pin given to him, strangely enough, again a cat's-eye, but of oval shape and not so brilliant as the first, and he seldom wore it. Again, several years passed, finally ending in his long, painful illness and death, at a comparatively early age, and the widow declared he had never been

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

lucky since the second pin came into the house. Not that he was unlucky, but time after time, just at the point of success, presto! failure appeared, or, if not actual failure, impossibility of making a brilliant *coup*. Some of the real estate which had promised so well decreased alarmingly in value, and he was harassed by several lawsuits, his health failed unexpectedly, and with one thing and another it seemed as if the luck which had so conspicuously stood his friend was about to desert him. There were endless trivial details told in confirmation of the story.

Some years after, the widow died, leaving no will, and the jewels came to the daughters, the elder of whom knew her mother's superstition in regard to the oval cat's-eye. Now, sad as it is to relate, this excellent family, like most other families, had its black sheep, in the person of the eldest son, who, with the eager assistance of a doting mother, had done his best to ruin the family, and had got hold of large sums of money to which he had not the slightest right, as they were the property of his brothers and sisters, and

the patience of the family had long been exhausted.

We are all human, thank goodness! and therefore liable to err, but the sisters resolved to obey their mother's oft-expressed wish, "that dear—— is to have his father's cat's-eye pin if anything happens to me." They determined that he should, and, no size or shape being specified, he was sent, and duly acknowledged, the *oval* cat's-eye, the round one being bestowed on the younger brother. Now this is an astonishing truth, but, since receiving that stone, he has gone from bad to worse. He has borrowed enormous sums at ruinous rates of interest, and is being sued on all sides by tradesmen, servants and employees whose bills he calmly ignores. He is in very bad health, and being hourly made a fool of by his wife, who is following in the footsteps of those gay ladies from whose ranks she was caught up and married by the young fool! Last of all, he is in the clutches of six shark-like and utterly unscrupulous lawyers, and the naughty brothers and sisters are watching with interest the end of the little drama. And here is the moral,

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

for the young brother, with his round stone, is steadily going up in the world and seems to share the luck of his father—so, after all, there may be something in the influence of the two cat's-eyes. Who knows ?

The ardent collector, sublimely indifferent to anything but the furtherance of his hobby, gives little heed to the psychic associations of the object he covets, nor cares for the terrible and warring mass of elements, forced by his whim to remain in perpetual and incongruous intimacy from which there is no escape. The loot of eastern lands captured by those brilliant adventurers who flourished in the days of " John Company " and hinting dimly of " Begums " and " lakhs " of rupees and turbans, huddled next to a placid " Book of Hours," or weapons with stories of violence and bloodshed haunting their steel surfaces. Furniture, redolent of the events in which it bore a silent part, and to all these clings, faint and sweet, the undying personalities of those to whom they once belonged.

To me there is nothing so pathetic as to wander through a curiosity shop, where lie, dusty and uncared for, the poor little

objects which were in their day the cherished playthings of a beauty. The broken fan with a faded scent of jasmine, the gaudy patch-box from which the lid hangs dejectedly by one hinge, those shabby, frivolous, high-heeled little slippers that once tripped defiantly to the *rendez-vous*, how desolate they look, how silently they plead! . . . and the fair feet which pressed their silken sides and gave them a *raison d'être*—

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan !

When the London Museum was first arranged, one of the attendants was asked if he saw ghosts there at night, or ever felt anything, and he replied with brief simplicity : “ Oh, it is awful ! ”

The psychic influence of furniture and of surroundings cannot be denied. Who has not, while idly turning over books on a stall, felt a shivering, creepy sort of chill? Or, handling letters of the French revolutionary days, been obsessed with the idea that all the world was full of blood and murder, which feeling instantly subsided when the paper was put down, and recurred on being touched a

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

second time. Many of us are aware of the contents of a letter before opening it, or, going to the telephone in answer to a ring, know, before asking, who is at the other end.

And does not this highly developed psychic sense make one unduly sensitive to these weird, uncanny feelings of depression inseparable from certain houses or rooms? A charmingly pretty and bright *appartement* occupied by a friend of mine in the ultra-modern and fashionable quarter of Paris, used to depress her so, that she could not live there and got rid of the lease, to learn later that the previous tenant had been a victim of drink, drugs and melancholia, finally being divorced from her husband! Once she had rid herself of the place, a friend came and told her that his wife had been so affected by the terrible feeling of depression while dining there one night, that she didn't get over it for days, and really could not bring herself to go there again.

Most women are superstitious about their clothes, and declare some frocks always spell a dismal evening. A girl of my acquaintance

declares solemnly that a certain pair of black-satin shoes ever brought quarrel and unpleasantness. The first time she wore them she had a violent quarrel with a man to whom she was deeply attached, and never could remember putting them on that something cross-grained did not happen: and they were charmingly pretty little shoes too, dainty enough to have pleased Cinderella and driven the "Ugly Sisters" to the extremes of jealousy!

Psychometrizing letters or articles of various sorts has become a great means of ascertaining what the sentiments of our friends are, and of getting in touch with the hidden spirit of things which have come into our possession from sources unknown. Who has not felt, while sitting in an old and stately chair, that the present-day costume is totally out of place in such an environment, and thought, "Oh, I should be dressed in a stately brocade, with powder and patches"; and the most iconoclastic finds, when strumming on an ancient spinet, that "rag time" and its choppy, syncopated measures unconsciously give way to a tinkling ditty like

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

“The Mouse and the Frog,” or some stately little measure to which Queen Elizabeth might have pranced and peacocked with the favourite of the moment. And how drowsy it makes one to play upon the spinet, a pleasant sort of reminiscent drowsiness, when one half thinks of nothing, and wonders what happened to the taper fingers which played on those keys when the ivory was white and fair ?

If one really believes in the psychic effect of heirlooms, is it not tempting fate to drape a bride in heavy old lace which has probably been in the heart of many a tragedy, and comes from no one may know where ? Old family lace has often adorned the slender forms of unhappy and unwilling brides who have gone through life the victims of tragedy from the first. If uncanny influences cling to clothes, what psychic complications must occur in those families in Thibet, where, it is said, garments are handed down—and worn—for as long as *two hundred years*, and none of the recent exploring expeditions speak at length of any special process of dry cleaning in use in the country

of the Grand Lama. But one must not listen too credulously to "idle rumour" with her "painted tongue"!

It is generally asserted that many of the Mandarin coats have a sinister influence on their present wearers, and this is easy to understand, if one holds them in the hands, and notices the acrid, Eastern smell and the queer "feel" they bring . . . and on many of the linings there are curious, dull stains which might be blood. . . .

Lady Dorothy Nevill, in one of her books, related a story of an idol—Chinese, I think—which brought all sorts of dire calamities on the house in which it lived, and became so troublesome that it had finally to be given to one of the museums. I was told of a girl who was playing with a small Chinese god, and, just for the fun of it, held it at arm's length, saying solemnly: "I curse ——," naming a well-known and universally detested politician. "I curse ——, may everything that is bad happen to him!" I'm not sure if she specified any special part of his body which was to be harmed, but as she held the little image in her hand, as

36

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

she stood in front of the fire, she was startled to see *its head fall off!*

Within a fortnight the much-detested politician was known to have great trouble with his throat, which kept him from speaking in public, so the country was freed from his demagogue utterances.

Even sceptics, on the whole, allow that mummies are harbingers of misfortune. If you ask at the British Museum for a picture of "the mummy," there is no question of "which mummy," the picture is handed to you instantly. This much-discussed mummy—or to be accurate, mummy-*case*—was given to the British Museum in 1889 by Mr. A. F. Wheeler. Some twenty years before this date, a party of *savants* exploring Thebes were shown this case by an Arab, sent by Mustapha Aga. There was no mummy in it, nor is it known what became of the body. It was a fine case, and they added it to their impedimenta with never a thought of the misfortunes it would entail. They had not long to wait.

When the servant of one of the five members of the party was handing him a

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

gun, it, without visible cause, exploded, injuring his arm so frightfully that it had to be amputated to save his life. Within the year the second of the party died in great poverty; the third was shot; number four lost most of his fortune and also died; a heavy toll. The case was brought home to England, and given by the fifth one of the party to a married sister, who from that hour experienced a run of ill-luck, including heavy money losses in the family.

On the owner having the case photographed there came the first hint of a dual personality, a sort of early Egyptian "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"; for the plate shown by the photographer was that of an almost entirely different woman, with a curious expression. Of course science easily accounts for this, for often when a painted article or an old painting is photographed, the camera reveals traces of a previous painting, or what is known as a "ghost" picture is the result. However,

*I do not say how true 't may be—
I tell it as 'twas told to me,*

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

and the photographer died within the year. . . .

The family of the lady in whose possession the case remained, earnestly besought her "to get the beastly thing out of the house," and she generously sent it to the British Museum, which is immune to malevolent influences. The carrier who took it died inside the week . . . the man who helped to remove it broke his arm, and within a short time after its arrival at the Museum, two of the attendants in the mummy-room died. . . .

The following is from the *Daily Mirror* of some time ago, the date being torn off :

"The death of Mr. Douglas Murray, which occurred a few days ago, recalls to mind the extraordinarily weird story of the mummy-case in the British Museum which was so much discussed a year or so ago. It was stated that several people had fallen under the spell of this mysterious case through having unwittingly offended the princess who formerly occupied it.

* * * *

"It may be briefly recalled that the case

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

was stolen by Arabs from its resting-place in Egypt and brought by two Englishmen to this country. One of these men was the late Mr. Douglas Murray, and on the journey home from Egypt he met with an accident, by which he lost his arm.

* * * *

“The story went on to relate how the mummy-case was photographed; the photographer who took the picture died within a few weeks, and the man who developed the plate had a terrible spell of bad luck, while the editor of the paper in which the picture appeared died very shortly afterwards. It is also well known that an English peeress and her daughter went to the Museum to see the case, and the younger of the two ladies remarked that ‘she didn’t care for that silly old mummy,’ and made a grimace at the case. On leaving the Museum she tripped and fell on the steps and broke her ankle.

* * * *

“Since then there do not seem to have been any stories in connection with this ill-omened casket. It may be mentioned, how-

40

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

ever, that a lady well learned in Egyptology painted a picture of the case, but she invariably took the precaution to place a plate of apples in front of the case, and these apples, the following morning, were found quite withered and dry ! ”

Who was this lady who brings such destruction on all who approach her ? She was of high rank, for the case is painted to represent jewels and flowers, and a number of the gods, such as Osiris and Annubis the Dog-headed, are there.

“ The late Mr. Fletcher Robinson, who went to much pains to verify many of the facts here recorded, added the comments on them that it is certain that the Egyptians had powers which we in the twentieth century may laugh at but yet can never understand. There is, for instance, a recorded case of an explorer who carried off a coffin on which was engraved the threat that if a man therein buried was disturbed by any thief of the graves, the body of the thief would be scattered in his death. The explorer laughed, for he was not of a superstitious nature ; yet sometime afterwards he was

torn to pieces by an elephant on a shooting expedition. Not long after he recorded these facts, Mr. Fletcher Robinson himself died at an early age after a brief illness.”

Being much interested in the mummy, I heard, casually, that it had been removed to a store-room or basement of the building, as these continued misfortunes began to get on the nerves of everybody, and, one morning glancing over the paper, the *Daily Mirror* again, my eye fell on this item, which no one but myself seems to have connected with all the other stories.

“ EXPLOSION AT BRITISH MUSEUM

“ MEN INJURED AND EGYPTIAN MUMMIES ENDANGERED BY ESCAPE OF GAS

“ Through an escape of gas an explosion occurred in the early morning in a basement of the British Museum, beneath the hall of the Egyptian Mummies.

“ A gas-fitter and his mate were endeavouring to locate the source of the escape, when there was a flash and a loud report, and the

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

men were thrown on their backs some distance away.

“The windows of the workshop were blown out, and flames sprang up, but were soon extinguished. The two men were found to be suffering from shocks and burns.”

After this item there is a lapse, until the middle of last year, when, talking to an acquaintance who is much interested in the weird, I alluded to the mummy.

“It is very remarkable,” she replied, “but some time ago, one of my cousins, who is a bit of an Egyptologist, went to the Museum with a friend to see the mummies, and as soon as he came to this one, said: ‘Why, what have they done with the real mummy-case? This one is nothing but an imitation.’”

He was certain, and finally, to settle the argument, they went to see the Curator. After a good deal of conversation, the latter confessed that the Museum had been so much troubled over the case, that the authorities eventually listened to the persuasive voice of an American millionaire,

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

and accepted his very generous offer, and the mummy-case was no longer in their possession. . . . *It was shipped to America on the one and only voyage of the ill-fated Titanic!*

Just one more mummy story, which, though incongruously hailing from the "Wild and Woolly West," is a fact. A party of Californians went on a tour of Egypt and the Holy Land, and returning, brought to a friend, as a souvenir, a small, mummified head which they had obtained somewhere in Egypt, and which was really a head, and not one of the usual imitations sold to travellers. The recipient of the gruesome gift was delighted, and kept the ugly, uncanny thing in a prominent place, though his wife openly detested it, and declared it would bring trouble to the house.

A short time afterwards he was motoring through the mountains, where, of course, the roads and bridges are crudely primitive, the latter being built of wood. Now the summers in California are dry, and barren of rain for months at a time, so dry that an empty bottle lying in the sun will set fire

THE PSYCHIC INFLUENCE OF JEWELS

to the whole countryside, causing mountain fires, of which no one can foretell the extent. One of these fires had, unknown to the traveller, undermined a bridge across a deep and dangerous cañon; in fact, the bridge was so charred that a stiff breeze would have scattered it into millions of atoms. Rushing up this mountain road at night, ignorant of fire or damaged bridge, came the motorist . . . to crash into unmeasured space.

His wife prosaically buried the head of the mummy in her kitchen garden, and the neighbours are awaiting events.

And if mummies are unlucky, why should a horrid, jagged-looking bone dagger, made from the thigh-bone of a man, from the South Sea Islands, be free from the imputation of evil?

The arrival of one in a house was the forerunner of innumerable *contre-temps*—of little pin-prick worries, for which there seemed no rhyme or reason, to larger and graver ones, and a general run of ill-luck. So pronounced did this become, for family and relations really got at loggerheads, and the situation threatened to grow complicated,

that the mistress of the house, after putting on her thinking cap, and eliminating, one after another, each curio in the house whose pedigree was uncertain, finally pounced on the bone dagger, which was promptly tried, condemned, and sold back to the curio-dealer from whom it originally came, and, remarkable to relate, peace and prosperity have hovered over the house ever since !

There is, at the present moment, a friend whose house is a miniature museum of Indian and Japanese art, and she has any number of "stuffed" and "unstuffed" Buddhas leering uncannily down from dark corners. The owners are up to their eyes in financial troubles, and few of their friends would care to pass the night under the gaze of the Buddhas—but then, "every one to his taste," as the old man said when he kissed his cow.

Of course there are rank sceptics whose "feet of clay" lead them along a path of doubt, challenging almost the very fact of their existence, and to these say :

*There are more things
In Heaven and earth, than are dreamed
Of in thy philosophy, Horatio.*

CHAPTER II

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

They that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it. Death cannot kill what never dies. Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same divine principle. . . . Death is but crossing the world as friends do the seas; they live in one another still.

WILLIAM PENN

WHAT is half so charming in the whole psychic gamut as the belief in reincarnation? What does it not account for? If one dislikes an acquaintance *à la* "Dr. Fell," it is a reversion to past lives. When two men meet, and, without the slightest apparent cause or previous knowledge of each other, begin to assume the attitude of two excited terriers when a woman appears, it is merely their "Karma." If we were able to see clairvoyantly their pasts, a scene in a tournament, or more primitive fist fight, where they strove for the favour of lady fair or

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

dark, would probably be the result of our research.

Should a man over-favour the flowing bowl, and consort with boon companions with whom he has nothing in common, or, attract to himself men of inferior calibre, much to the amazement of his friends, it is because he is merely living out the laws of cause and effect. His "Karma" brings the retribution of other incarnations without will or effort of his own, which is—all said and done—an easy way for a drunkard to avoid the responsibility of choice!

To take reincarnation from the beginning, when the "group-soul" shines through the eyes of a faithful dog, then detaching itself, looks out from the eyes of a kindly, primitive man, and so on and on, reads like a romance. And, unquestionably, any lover of dogs will readily agree that it is not a great gulf from those dogs who look at one with great soft brown eyes, like an affectionate woman, to the next incarnation. And a rather curious point is, that the eyes of generations of English-bred dogs, who live, so to speak, as members of the family and are treated as

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

kindly as human beings, have a totally different expression to those of Oriental breeds. There is a look of aggression and unfriendliness in these dogs of foreign extraction, and they are totally lacking in that sympathetic understanding so often found shining from the shaggy, ill-kept face of some waif and stray, an expression, by the way, which is never seen in the eyes of a cat.

And who can quarrel with the belief that flowers have elemental souls? No rose lover, of a certainty, for it is indisputable that flowers love some, and for others will not grow, or thrive, or blossom. Perhaps this is because the little Earth Elementals are not friendly to those who train and watch them, and—anyone will tell you—that if the little Earth Elementals are not your friends, and if the little Water Elementals dislike you, there will appear great cracks in the ground, and no matter what you do, the flowers will refuse to thrive, however carefully you watch and wait on them. While—if they love you—plant what you will, upside down, in the wrong soil, in shady

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

dell when the plant is known to love the sunshine, and all will be well. Break off a bit of a rose at the wrong season, stick it in, forget all about it, and next time you wander through the mazes of your garden, a flourishing and beautiful tree greets your surprised eyes! Oh yes, ask anyone with a knowledge of Elementals and see what they tell you!

And from the reincarnation of roses and the memories and romance attached to them, it is but a step to those gardens of the past where we wander at will in our dreams . . . or on the Astral Plane, as one calls it, according to belief. One gropes vaguely among the infinite sweetness of many pasts when loitering by falling waters in the tender twilight of scented gardens, and thinks of those who are gone . . . of those who

Are sleeping

By streams where roses fade,

and wonders if it is the souls of the "rose-lipt maids" who are again born in the beautiful flowers?

But it is unnecessary to sleep to go back

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

to past lives, for at the most unexpected moments scenes rise before us, in which we or our friends loom as clear cut as paintings, and with a *nuance* of colourings no painting can equal. The following experiences—absolutely true—were told me by the friends to whom they happened.

“ I was sitting in the library of one of the big ocean liners—I don't mind telling you it was the ill-fated *Lusitania*—reading, when, all of a sudden I saw before me a most peculiar, narrow, very long room, panelled in oak, with unobtrusive windows. In the centre of the room was a long oak table with a yellow-shaded lamp, and two girls stood in the circle of light, and were looking at each other in apparent consternation. One I did not know, the other is an intimate friend. I made a note of the time—allowing for the difference between London and ocean, and wrote her what I had seen, and soon received the reply :

“ ‘ Your last letter *absolutely* took my breath away for the scene you describe *did* happen on the 30th, not on the 19th, so you must have been seeing into the future for me.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

It was extraordinary that you should see that room, as it is a most unusual sort of room, and you describe it exactly. It is very low ceilinged and there's a tremendous number of curios from the South Sea Islands, India, etc. The walls are panelled with boards. It belongs to a man with a *very strong* personality. It's right at the top of the house and was attics and he turned them into rooms for himself. I was up there with another woman and there was a man there too, one afternoon ; but one night we were having a rag and another girl and I got locked in there and were terrified!!! I wonder which time you saw ? I do think you are a " weird " person. . . .'

" I saw her on another occasion, crossing a stately ballroom, in a pink dress, talking to a man who seemed to be a naval officer, and when I told her she wrote :

" ' It really is awfully funny about you seeing things, for the ballroom episode did take place. The man isn't a naval man, but lives in a naval atmosphere ! and might look like one ! and I *was* wearing the pink dress.' " Since the war broke out the man has joined

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

the Flying Corps, and is, even more than before, in a 'naval atmosphere.' ”

“ But I think the most interesting thing I ever saw for her was a long-ago Persian incarnation. There was a flat, bare, unfamiliar country with open roads, stretching far into the distance . . . as background, two mountain peaks, so tall, so sharp as to be described only in the expression 'sugar loaf.' The hour was that of the setting sun, and she was sitting by the road, clad in loose draperies, with exaggeratedly large turquoise-matrix earrings in her ears; in fact, they seemed the striking note of her costume. By her side stood a tall, slender, very handsome man with olive skin and beautifully chiselled features. On his head was the high straight cap one so often sees in Persian paintings. . . . There was no action in the scene, but the strange sharp hills and the sunset colours are still fresh in my memory . . . and I saw her once as a bacchante, 'tired in leopard skins, with flowers dropping from her hair. . . .'

“ Another peculiar experience happened one night while dining with friends. The

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

table was long and narrow, and not over decorated, so that one could see those seated opposite without dodging about. Many of the people I knew well, but facing me was a woman whom I knew very slightly, and had never given a thought to, except in my own mind, putting her down as a person who lacked social *savoir-faire*. Not being much interested in my partner, my thoughts strayed, and I got the impression of Egypt. . . . Then I heard her say she never took any exercise, hated work of any sort, didn't care for gardening, in fact, was lazy. Like a flash rose to my lips the words, which I had the sense to bite off: 'Of course you don't like work, for this is the first time you have ever lived the life of a lady. You used to be a slave working on the pyramids of Egypt!'

"What a sensation I should have caused! Then I saw a sunset in Egypt where one of the great pyramids was being laboriously up-built, and the thousands of tired workers crawled about like flies over the sands, and there, vague and listless and weary, toiled my *vis-à-vis* clad in a scanty and stained yellow garment!

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

“That night I saw an Elizabethan incarnation of my hostess, when, as a rosy-cheeked Devonshire lass, she hurried at the call of ‘Drake’s Drum,’ and was one of the first who crowded to the sea-wall to greet the bronzed hero on his return.

“She is a charming woman of French descent, and on another occasion I was sitting beside one of her nephews at dinner, and the words flashed into my mind, ‘Your name was Jean de Meriac, and you used to be at the court of Henry II,’ and Vendôme seemed interwoven with his past life. It was not hard to picture him in the slashed doublet and other fripperies of that day as one looked at his dark, rather un-English features. After dinner, when we were all amusing ourselves with palmistry, I said to him, ‘Within the year you will completely change your life. It looks to me as if you were going to have something to do with the Army.’

“He laughed, and said, ‘No such luck, my sight won’t let me. I’m thinking of trying tea-planting.’

“Within eight months he had a commis-

sion at the Front, and is now promoted for 'distinguished service on the field.' No trouble about his eyesight ! ”

There is no accounting for the scenes which so often, and so incongruously materialise when one is far from thinking of such subjects. One of the clearest I ever saw was a tremendous old still-room, with a glowing red-tiled floor, and a fireplace large enough to roast the proverbial ox. To the left of the room was a diamond-paned window in three mullions, through which the sun poured on to a great table, as white as sand and “elbow grease” could make it. At the right side of the fireplace was a narrow door, and next to this, against the wall, an oak Jacobean dresser, laden with quaint blue and white china plates. A small fire glowed on the hearth, and bending over this was a slim figure, which eventually turned, and hurried to place a great white jug full of some steaming fluid on the table. As she turned I recognised one of my most intimate friends ! Of course the dress was unfamiliar, a dull green, with big sleeves and a “tabbed-basque,” of the time of the ladies of Charles

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

the First's court. A little behind the fashions, as well might be, for those who lived in the country could not keep pace with the extravagances of the "London Madames" who swaggered before the public in their travesties of French taste. Here is the amusing part—on her nose was perched a pair of large, perfectly round *horn* spectacles! and her fair hair hung in "love-locks" at either side of her face!

She was evidently busied in concocting something in the still-room, and spoke occasionally to an old woman seated near the window.

Now the really odd part is this, that she has to-day an absolute love for furniture, panelling, or anything of the Stuart period, and has worn glasses ever since she was a child, and prefers *green* to any other colour. Another characteristic is her wonderful willingness to do any and everything about a house which can add to anyone's comfort. She is also a "good hand" at jams, and the many things her predecessor brewed in that peaceful still-room.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

If one kept all the waifs and strays of stories heard casually there would be no end. For instance, a lady saw on the forehead of the man facing her at a dinner, the following scenes. First: an accident in the hunting-field, which it seemed *had* happened the previous winter; then he was proposing to a girl; and third, and last, she saw him lying dead on a battlefield. It quite spoilt her evening, for he was a stranger to her. This was some time before the Boer War, and she heard a long time after that he *had* proposed to the girl, who refused him, and down on his luck, had gone to South Africa, where he was among the first to be killed.

An interesting bit of reincarnation is that of a well-known artist, who, on being seized with a fit of inspiration and artistic frenzy, would betake himself to his studio where he remained lost to sight for days at a time. During the first of these disappearances his wife was frightened, as he would neither speak nor respond to calls, nor would he eat the food prepared and taken to the door by the despairing household. What the end might

58

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

have been it is not very easy to say, had not chance drawn him from his lair.

The household bread was always baked at home, and on the usual baking morning a rich, crusty-brown, delicious smell permeated the house, awakening the artist to the fact that he was starving!

Bursting from his studio, dishevelled and unshaven, he rushed to the kitchen, where, to the terror of the stupefied cook—who did not at first recognise in this wild-looking man her immaculate master—he proceeded to devour most of the morning's "bake."

Now, when the artistic fit is on too long, and "genius burns" more than strictly necessary, the smell of fresh bread is used to lure him back to the world of everyday life. What can have been his last incarnation?

Was he a starving beggar? Was he a monk in charge of the convent ovens where the bread nearly burnt, thanks to his surreptitious devotion to art? Did he belong to the Italian Renaissance, one of those picturesque artists who alternately squandered and starved as fortune smiled or frowned,

and, deep in the contemplation of the wonderful work growing under his fingers, oblivious of all, but that he painted the form of the "Mona Lisa," so dead to the life of this mundane sphere that, from sheer weariness, he fell faint at the foot of the easel . . . to be found next morning by the old woman who cleaned the studio. Did she, being of a practical turn of mind, hasten to revive him with the smell and taste of a freshly baked loaf which she was carrying home for the nourishment of her family. *Quien sabe?*

Interesting as the past lives of one's friends may be, they quite pale before the charm of seeing one's own doings, and of tracing the links which have bound us through the ages with those we love, or hate. It explains by affinity of many incarnations why some are friends from the moment of meeting, why certain epochs of history possess the familiarity of everyday life. With France there is an affinity even family history fails to explain, though so far it has been impossible to see before the terrible court of Catherine de Medici and her *escadre volante*. Then there is a break . . . and the days of *Louis*

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

le bien aimé unroll with their glittering splendour.

From Catherine to Touraine with its long, white roads, its sluggish rivers and its châteaux whispering tales of queens and courtesans . . . and then, Chenonceau, where Mary Stuart lived her brief honeymoon before fading into the Scotch mists. . . .

“Chenonceau was the scene of my first peep into the French past, for I saw myself on the bridge leading to the drawbridge, by the principal entrance, leaning over the right side, watching the water in the moat, as children will. Beside me stood the dearest boy, with curly, close-cropped black hair and deep, velvety eyes . . . clad in Lincoln green and a russet doublet, and I, in the white and blue worn by those dedicated to the Virgin Mary until they are seven years of age. . . .

“Then I was one of a stately throng in the chapel at Versailles, where a splendid pageant was being enacted, standing with two other women apart, close to the high Altar, on the left as seen from the gallery. The details

are elusive, and I saw more clearly, myself—stepping from a dark, rather simple *chaise à porteurs* in the grand gallery, lightly touching the extended finger-tips of a gallant in dark-green velvet, who waited, bowing deeply, to assist me . . . and I have walked with the same escort in the gardens of the Grand Trianon, when the masses of azaleas flung their heavy scent on the June air, and the fragrance of the orange blossoms was overpoweringly sweet. Green is the colour of sympathy, and this time he wore the most wonderful coat, of a dull, jade green, stiff with curious embroidery. There are many other scenes in old France, where the same actors play their little parts. . . .

“The splendour of ancient Roman days. . . . A background of blue sea and sky, with mountains, olive trees and slender marble columns. It might be one of those famous villas at Capri? And there I stood and welcomed a tall man with a face and hair of warm gold colour, clad as the Roman Patricians, his cothurns studded with jewelled clasps, his mantle thrown aside for the heat. Our relationship I can never

PEEPS AT PAST LIVES

decide, but we walked to and fro as lovers might do.

“Then there was a scene in the Forum, where the multitude applauded his speech amidst much shouting. . . . The Coliseum loomed up next with gala decorations and every appearance of a true Roman holiday, for the women were decked in their gayest raiment, and there was no stint of laughter or applause. I was in the imperial box, and listened complacently to the words of praise and adulation showered on my companion, the successful orator. I would give much to grasp the theme of that speech, for then, perhaps, I could know definitely the day in which we lived, but alas! the dimness of years refuses to brighten.

“The last of the Roman pictures: a magnificent banquet, spread with all the luxury of decadent Rome, the same congratulations, the same adulation, and healths drunk out of golden goblets; while I reclined across the knees of the hero of the feast. A very curious and interesting detail of this scene—from a woman’s point of view—is that over the white robes I was dressed in,

was thrown a peplum of most peculiar dull, reddish-purple, a colour only allowed to those of highest rank, and, it is well known, that there *was* a Tyrian purple, the secret for dyeing which is a lost art. For further description of costume, my head bore a heavy wreath of dull, golden grapes, and I was radiant." What did it signify : what does it all mean ?

CHAPTER III

ON PRESENTIMENT

WHAT are commonly called “ presentiments ” are among the most curious and interesting of psychic phenomena. From our earliest childhood we have been brought up to believe there is something in nurse’s feeling words, when she declares—after some domestic calamity has been registered in the annals of the nursery—“ that she felt in her bones all day that *something* was going to happen.”

Of course, until lately all these things have been so commonplace a part of our daily life that there was no wish to analyse them, or to trouble over the feeling that something pleasant or unpleasant was about to occur. Why, often on a perfect day, when everything is running fair and smooth, does one feel so intensely irritated that it is with difficulty the ordinary routine of the

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

day is gone through without giving way to uncalled-for snappishness? Why, when the sky is a beautiful blue, and every wish of the heart is gratified, is there this crumple in the rose-leaf? The materialist tersely grunts "liver!" But no, you ask your Theosophist friend, who instantly replies that some disturbance on the Astral Plane is the demoralising factor. What disturbance? No one quite knows, though these attacks of astral, or commonplace irritability, are more often than not followed by tidings of some catastrophe which furnishes grounds for the irritability, or excess of electricity. History is full of well-authenticated warnings and presentiments, and, at the present moment, in connexion with the war, one hears daily of mysterious warnings received by those at the front, which produce such a strong impression that the incident is told to a comrade, and finally comes to us.

Not a day goes by that one does not hear, as convincing and plain truth, all sorts of tales from the front, and "somewhere in France," of men who *knew* that the next day was to be their last. In some cases

PRESENTIMENT

they even went to the length of giving up watches and souvenirs to friends, so convinced were they of the certainty of their approaching end, and, alas! in most cases, their forebodings were only too true.

“Dining last night at Mr. H——s, a Captain —— was there from the front. He told me of two men in his regiment he knew, who *knew* themselves they were going to be killed, although there wasn't any engagement going on. One was young —— (the grandson of a celebrated Liberal statesman), and they were both killed, and were ‘sniped.’ . . . One of the two, I believe, even handed over his watch, etc., he felt so sure.”

I heard recently of a woman who is *haunted* by the dread that her husband will be killed at the front. Twice she has gone through the agony of parting with him. Twice—this reads like a fable—he has, through some technical error, returned without even having left England! The first time he was aboard the transport, the gangway lifted, when the officer in charge examining his papers, exclaimed: “There has been a mistake! Get ashore as fast as you

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

can," and, like a whirlwind, he was on *terra firma* again. The second reason for his postponed departure I have not heard, and at last he has really gone to the front . . . and his wife waits.

If one can believe newspaper tales, gallant young Warneford declared that he would never live to be fêted and lionised on his return home. . . . Some presentiment of his tragic and unnecessary end flitted across his brain. Did he suspect treachery that made those bird-like wings fold, and fail him at the critical moment? What a waste of young life! But he died with his fame still fresh upon him, and will live in the memory of men, longer perhaps for his brilliant promise, than if he had lived to see its fulfilment. Such is history.

*Whom the gods loved they gave in youth's first
flower*

*One infinite hour of glory. That same hour,
Before a leaf drops from the laurel, come
Winged Death and Sleep to bear Sarpedon
home.*

There is the story of the two Tommies,

PRESENTIMENT

who were doing outpost duty in the trenches, "somewhere in France," and one suddenly said to the other in an interval of "sniping":

"I say—look there!"

"Look where?" replied the other, loath to take his eye off a possible German head that might expose itself. "Look at what? There's not much to look at but bloomin' Germans, and I've got my eye peeled for *them*. What is it?"

"Just there," said the other. "See—that dear old lady in grey—over there."

The other turned his head for the fraction of a second. "Good Lord! my mother!" he exclaimed, half-rising in his excitement. . . . He fell back, dead, with a bullet in his brain.

There is a story of the heir of a well-known family and title, whose life was miraculously saved by being pinned down by a *powerful invisible hand* just as he wanted to stand up, when he would have been struck by a shell!

Though the air is thick with "war, and rumours of war," pregnant with occult and

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

inexplicable warnings, it is most difficult to put one's finger on these stories at the moment they are wanted. There are endless whispers of gallant Highlanders, lying on the battlefield, wounded, parched with thirst, who are succoured by mysterious little children bearing cups of water to moisten their fevered throats. There is no doubt in the minds of the men that these children really came to their aid. And there are anxious mothers who appear to their sons, on what is the eve of their last day on earth, as in the previous story. There is, in fact, a mighty undercurrent of the occult and supernatural sweeping along in the wake of this cruel war. And, again, the women left at home have seen in visions those whom they love before they are killed.

A mother, whose son was at the front, in the very thick of the fight, was praying very earnestly in church, when, all of a sudden, her son appeared before her. . . . She gazed at him, half-doubting the evidence of her senses, and he spoke :

“ Mother, it is well with me whatever you

PRESENTIMENT

hear. *Whatever you hear, I am happy and well.*”

Then there was a blank space, where a moment before her son had stood, and the mother continued her prayers for the absent, hardly daring to believe—and yet convinced—that her son had been near her.

The next day news came from the War Office that he had been killed, but, much to the amazement of friends, and the indignation of would-be consolers, she was resigned and at peace, and yet, they say, she had been devoted to the dead son.

Every war brings forth stories of the above type, but they are none the less interesting, and so is this one, where a presentiment, or occult warning, saved the lives of a good many. The names are omitted.

A R.A.M.C. man had a curious presentiment one evening at seven o'clock, and, acting upon it, although all the men and horses were comfortably ensconced for the night, he went and moved them all, telling his orderly to put his bed in the basement. He was one of those people who believed in his

own convictions, and subsequent events showed how wise he had been in giving way to what some might have called an idle fancy. At twelve o'clock the first shell screamed through the night, landing, and bursting *in the very spot from which he had moved men and horses!* a fragment of the shell shattering the windows of the room in which he was to have slept. The feeling of something being about to happen was told to his brother officers at nine o'clock, before he retired to bed.

THE MYSTERIOUS PINK OINTMENT

Though perhaps this story errs on the side of the frivolous, it may interest the softer sex, as the subject is rather for them than for the so-called lords of creation.

Mrs. M——, one hot summer, became obsessed with the idea that her complexion was not up to the mark. There was no reason for this, except perhaps that the intense heat and out-of-door life had been trying; anyway, she went to see her doctor. This gentleman asked her the stereotyped

PRESENTIMENT

questions, and, finally deciding that she had better see a skin specialist, recommended one in the town where he practised, instead of sending Mrs. M—— to London. He spoke very highly of the doctor, and Mrs. M—— forthwith hastened to see him.

Doctor number two asked the same questions; could not give any definite cause for the general look of her skin of which the lady complained; in fact, he was non-committal to an even greater extent than most of his fraternity.

Finally Mrs. M—— asked him, point-blank, what was the matter with her, to receive the consoling answer:

“That the conditions of which she complained might be due to a variety of causes,” which was, of course, very cheering. So, being a woman who had an insatiable craving for information even if it didn't interest her, she begged to know what treatment he would suggest? And this time she received a definite answer that absolutely took away her breath, for the doctor gravely suggested that he would “certainly *recom-*

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

mend that she had all the skin removed from her face, and a new skin would grow ” !

Though taken aback, the word “ quack ” flashed into her mind, but she merely said : “ Oh, indeed, and how long would this treatment take ? ” And was told that for two weeks she would be obliged to remain in a darkened room, and not go downstairs at all for fear of catching cold, in which case erysipelas might set in.

“ And at the end of that time, I would have a new skin ? ” she asked quietly, thinking what fools most of the doctor’s patients must be if he gave advice like this.

“ You would have a beautiful new skin, like a baby’s,” he told her solemnly.

“ And—would the new skin remain fine, or would I have to have it done again ? ” she asked, athirst for information.

“ You would have to repeat the process about—um—once in six months.”

“ And would it be painful ? ”

“ It would necessarily cause a little discomfort, ah—a feeling of ah—slight smarting when the skin began to peel.”

Mrs. M—— thought of the busy life she

PRESENTIMENT

led, and the awful convulsion which would rend the household if such a case of "Beauty Doctoring" came to the ears of the family.

"I'm afraid," she said pleasantly, "that I haven't the time to give to it just at present. Perhaps, though, you could give me something to put on my face that will take away the effects of so much hot weather."

This the doctor said he could do, though greatly deploring the fact that Mrs. M—— would not really put herself in his hands to be skinned. (He used less expressive terms!) So she went off with a prescription which was made up by the chemist, and which she was to apply to her face that night.

"If, after one or two applications, you should experience a slight—er—irritation, you must let me know," the doctor told her in farewell.

It was late that night when she retired, and, not having said anything to the family about the suggested treatment, prepared to follow the doctor's directions. On opening the china jar she looked distastefully at the

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

paste it contained, which was of a peculiar, very deep, bright pink, something she had never seen before. As she paused to lay down the lid of the jar, and put her finger in the mixture, she had the most extraordinary feeling of reluctance to apply it to her face. Something positively held her back; it was as if a hand pressed against hers and tried to stop her. She did not know what to think of it. She felt absolutely certain that *something* tried to warn her not to put the ointment on her face. Then she tried a second time, and never felt so reluctant in her life about doing anything, as she did to use that ointment, and the same feeling, as if something held her hand back, came over her. She was puzzled, but being a prudent and economical lady, she said: "Oh, *bother!* What's the use of paying a doctor if you don't use his stuff?" and hastily smeared the pink preparation over her face with a sort of bravado. But she felt dissatisfied.

The following day nothing happened. The next morning her husband said to her:

"What on earth is the matter with your

PRESENTIMENT

face ? ” and looking in the glass she beheld a sight. She was red and inflamed.

“ Oh, *why* didn't I take the warning ? ” she moaned, and then explained her visit to the doctor and everything connected with it. Her husband was furious, and man-like wanted to make a row at once, but was calmed, and agreed to wait a few days.

To cut a long story short, her whole face peeled dreadfully in great flakes of skin ; peeled almost to the bone, and for months, really years, after was so sensitive that the least sun or wind chapped it most distressingly. On giving the prescription to another doctor to read, it proved to be a mixture containing mercury, and one only given in the case of the strongest “ parasitic diseases ” !

It seemed that the doctor went bankrupt the week following Mrs. M——'s visit, and she was hard-hearted enough to believe that he saw a case in her out of which to mend his fortunes. She never met him again, as he left the town.

She often speaks of that terribly strong feeling of opposition to using that ointment

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

which came across her as she waited, and vows that the next time, no matter how idiotic she may appear, she will obey the unseen warning, for a few more applications and her skin would have been scarred deeply and ruined irremediably.

And this, mind you, was not a case of a vain woman going to a "Beauty Doctor," it was a sober, everyday practitioner, recommended by another sober and conservative practitioner; so the fraternity could not say, "Oh, you ladies! If you *will* go to that class of people——"

AN UNEXPLAINED WARNING

My mother had been ill for a long time, but no one, even the doctors, considered it a mortal illness, or one that justified them in sending for me, as the distance between us was very great. Although my sister and friends wrote of my mother, and she herself wrote constantly, no one conveyed the idea to me that the case was serious, and it was a shock to receive a letter from my sister one morning, and one from an old servant, telling me the truth, and that I had better come.

PRESENTIMENT

To contradict their fears, I had but recently had a letter from my mother, who spoke of herself as being *quite well*, and said the “doctors marvelled at her powers of recuperation.” All this was very contradictory and unsettling, and I went to town for a few days, returning late on Friday afternoon. In the course of a conversation with my maid, concerning the happenings in the household during my absence, she said (being Irish):

“Sure, ma’am, we had a fright last night.”

I asked her what she meant, and being a voluble conversationalist she flowed gently on.

“Me an’ the cook were after having a letter to post, so we went down to the gate to catch the postman on his way to the village. We left Jane” (Jane was the between-maid, a solid lump of a girl with matter-of-fact proclivities, and our butler was at the front,) “alone in the kitchen, and were after telling her not to be afraid, as we’d not be long, and she said she didn’t mind, and locked the door, and so we went

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

to the gate and caught the postman, as it was getting dark, and hurried back. When we got in the kitchen Jane said :

“ ‘ You thought you’d give me a good frightening, didn’t you ? but *I’m* not so silly. You can’t play your tricks on *me.*’ And me an’ the cook were so surprised at the cheek of her, that we said together, ‘ And what is it you are meaning ? ’ And she said, ‘ Oh, don’t try to pretend you didn’t. I’m as sharp as you.’ ‘ And you may be much sharper,’ said the cook, ‘ but whatever are you talking about ? ’ And she said, ‘ I knew it was you and your tricks, ringing the door bell to give me a fright, but you didn’t frighten *me.*’

“ An’ me an’ the cook looked at each other, ma’am, and I said, ‘ You must be crazy. We didn’t ring the bell. We waited at the gate, and came straight home. You must be dreaming ’ ; and all we could say to her, she wouldn’t give in. The bell had rung three times, first very loud, then softer, and she looked up and saw it was the front-door bell moving, and went into the hall and looked through the glass, and couldn’t

PRESENTIMENT

see anyone there. And just then the constable came in, and he was angry *indeed*, for he had just been about the place as he always does when the master is away, being a most obliging man, and he hadn't seen anyone hanging about, and nobody could have got in, for we could have seen them on the hill as we waited for the postman." Here she paused for breath, and I, though having my convictions, said nothing, for fear of alarming her.

"The constable had a good look about, and told us *never* to open the door of a night, no matter who rang, and always to telephone to him if we got frightened."

"Very sensible advice," I assented, wondering what I should hear soon. As one may suppose, I had my own ideas as to the mysterious bell-ringer, and I'm sure the servants had theirs, though nothing more was said. I could not settle down to my usual occupations, and seemed waiting for something to happen, and so we got to Monday morning. Then, early, before I was awake, came a "deferred" telegram, with the words: "*Mother became uncon-*

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

scious at 3 A.M. Saturday. No hope. Better come."

No matter the event in a woman's life, she has to think of clothes, and soon after breakfast I went to town on the most ghastly day's shopping I have ever experienced. Going up in the train I felt so fearfully depressed that I could hardly keep my mind on the conversation, having met a friend who had recently lost her husband, and who insisted on telling me all the details.

My brain was in a whirl, and, all of a sudden, I saw before me my mother's well-remembered room, with its imposing old-fashioned monumental bed. The room looked natural though vague, and I could see a number of people bending over the figure on the bed, and there seemed to be a suppressed and dreary excitement. Then it faded, and I knew she was dead. . . .

When I reached home, tired and depressed, I was met by the familiar orange envelope, which had arrived some time previously.

"Sure, ma'am, I was upstairs, and I heard the dog howling something dreadful,

PRESENTIMENT

so I looked out the window, and there was the telegram boy coming up the drive on his bicycle," explained my faithful hand-maiden. "And I says to meself when I heard his howl, glory be, but it's bad news, sure."

And it was, for my mother had passed away at three o'clock in the morning, which, allowing for the difference in time, was just the hour of my vision in the train. . . . So, after all, "there are more things in heaven and earth" than we are capable of explaining just at present.

Once the news spread through the household, I was assured that they had *known* just what the rings at the bell meant, but didn't like to worry me. And I, of course, had known, too. Eventually, receiving letters with the details, those mysterious rings occurred just at the minute she sank into that unconsciousness from which she never awakened: when her spirit passed from her body, when she ceased to live mentally.

It is all strange and wonderful, for, when I said good-bye to my mother at a casual

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

parting a few years before, I knew that we should never meet again.

THE TALE OF THE ASTRAL SPY

For a long and drearily monotonous time A—— B—— had been lying desperately ill in a nursing-home, but when the crisis of his illness passed, he fell into a deep sleep, and had a curious dream, which, owing to the strong impression it made on him, he was able to “bring through” unusually clearly.

In the dream he was commanded by an invisible agency to get up from his bed, go to a certain little bookseller’s shop in the Strand—and he had never heard of the shop—buy a designated book, the very name of which was unknown, turn to a specified page, and from the directions found there, “to make a model that would be very important and useful in submarine and aerial warfare.” Then he was instructed to “write to a friend, and borrow a specified book, which would give further details useful to the invention.”

The dream so obsessed him, that he worried

PRESENTIMENT

and implored his nurses to take him out to the shop, until, in sheer weariness, they assented, *and he went and found the book!*

He was a man deeply interested in the occult, and from time to time he was able to gather further details in sleep, so that when the teller of this story met him, the invention was nearly complete. He was utterly confident of its practical success. Apart from the details of his invention gained in sleep, he became familiar with the plots of the Germans, *and that they were trying to wrest his invention from him in sleep!* He also said that, ere they took this despicable means of gaining knowledge for nothing, they had tried to steal his model, and there had been two attempts on his life.

His chief enemy was a well-known and highly placed woman in London society, who, unsuspected, spied for her Government in the circles where she moved without a shadow of suspicion resting on her. But in sleep, she waged many an astral fight, to wrest secrets which would have been of

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

infinite value to those who employed her, from the unwary sleeper. A—— B—— had innumerable encounters with this emissary, but the utter futility of trying to explain the intangible to persons in power is too well known for him to lay himself open to the charge of being a meddling lunatic ; though he knew, as did many other psychically inclined people, that she was a spy of the worst type, he held his peace, as it is difficult to arrest an astral spy who hovers nebulously above Portsmouth, or over those prohibited areas where the foreigner is forbidden to penetrate.

All this happened a couple of years ago, and in August 1914 the war broke out, and very recently some officers returning from Germany read while there of a marvellous invention, useful in war for Zeppelins and submarines, and proceeded to describe what seemed to be the jealously guarded invention of the little man !

Did they wrest his invention from him in sleep after all ?

PRESENTIMENT

THE "RUSSIAN RALLY" STORY

This weird little incident is strictly true and the experience of two intimate friends of mine, who are obliging enough to contribute it to the general *pot-pourri*.

"I really must write and tell you about such a strange thing that happened the other week.

"My sister and I had just come out of the Polytechnic at Oxford Circus; it was about five o'clock and the day that there was such bad news from Russia, when the Russians were being pushed back and back.

"As we were crossing over the road to go along Mortimer Street, I saw a newspaper man holding a poster, and on it was

" 'GREAT RUSSIAN RALLY!'

" 'Oh, look!' I cried. 'Isn't that extraordinary! Great Russian Rally!'

" 'What *do* you mean?' said my sister. 'It is the Dead Brides Case!'

"And I looked again, and what my sister said was quite true. 'Yes, yes, you are right,' I said, 'but I am perfectly certain

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

that before long, that at that very spot you will see the poster I saw just now.'

"The next day, at the very same spot, we saw a poster with

" 'GREAT RUSSIAN RALLY !'

on it. . . ."

Was it possible that my friend clairvoyantly saw the news which arrived at that hour, and was, for some reason only known to the Censor and the War Office, kept back for twenty-four hours? She is intensely psychic and sensitive, and had not been thinking of the Russians or discussing them in any way which would have led to her seeing the poster, so it must have been impressed on her mind by some occult means.

She also sends this tale of a presentiment.

"The story I mentioned yesterday was told me by the head man at F—— and B——'s (the place that restores churches and puts up monumental things to people). He said that a lady came and ordered a fountain to be put up in Westminster in memory of her son, who was killed at Mons

PRESENTIMENT

(I think it was); and they commenced it, and when they'd done the base, etc., she came and said, 'Oh, I don't want you to work on this, because I have a very strong feeling that my son is alive.' They thought she was overstrained, etc., but two weeks later she came in again, and said that she'd heard that her son *was* alive. He was one of those four or five officers who got a cheque through to Cox's Bank, do you remember? It's rather an ordinary story; the only curious thing about it is that Mr. B——, who told me it, had been there forty years, and he said it is the only case he's ever had of commencing a live person's memorial thing."

This letter contains another case of what may be called psychic sensitiveness.

"R.A.U., DUNKIRK.

"June 28/15.

"A somewhat interesting case of sensitiveness came within my notice a few days ago. A little Belgian kiddie, about three years old, in hospital here, along with his sister and brother, aged about thirteen and six-

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

teen respectively, in the convalescent state of diphtheria, had been asleep on the evening of June 21 and wakened about eight-thirty, or nine o'clock, and told his nurse (Belgian) that D—— was being bombarded.

“She only laughed, and mentioned the name of another place which seemed to her more probable, but the youngster persisted, and one of our doctors coming along at the moment, heard him say : ‘No ; D——.’”

“As you will be aware, the thing occurred at three o'clock the next morning.

“This is at one of our hospitals inland, some distance from D——, where I am now.

“I went with my nurse, also a Belgian, to talk to the kiddie and its sister, who said it was quite correct. He is very shy and will not speak much.

“You will perceive I cannot mention names of places, owing to the censorship of our letters, but perhaps it will not matter, or I can give you those particulars when I return. . . .”

The letter is signed.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

WHEN so eminent a scientist as Sir Oliver Lodge gives utterance to a "striking declaration of his spiritual faith" like the following, it is time for the lay mind to heed, and ponder.

Sir Oliver said: "That once you realised that consciousness was something outside the mechanism it made use of, you realised that survival of existence was naturally the simplest thing. It was unreasonable that the soul should jump out of existence when the body was destroyed. We ourselves were not limited to the few years that we lived on this earth. We should go on without it. We should certainly continue to exist; we should certainly survive.

" 'Why do I say this?' Sir Oliver proceeded, '*I say it on definite scientific grounds. I say it because I know that certain friends*

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

of mine still exist, because I have talked to them. *Communication is possible.* One must obey the laws, find out the conditions. *I do not say it is easy, but I say it is possible, and I have conversed with them as I could converse with anyone in this room now.* Being scientific men they have given proof that it is real, not impersonation, not something emanating from myself. They have given definite proofs. Some of them are being published, many are being withheld for a time, but will be published later. *I tell you it is with all the strength of conviction I can muster that it is so, that we do persist, that people still take an interest in things going on, that they still help us and know more about things than we do, and that they are able from time to time to communicate with us.*

“*I know that this is a tremendous statement and a tremendous conclusion. I do not think many of us realise how great a conclusion it is. You know that not I only but many scientific men think the same and many men who are not scientific. If a person gives thirty or forty years of his life to this investigation he is entitled to*

92

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

state the result which he has arrived at. You must give evidence, of course. It is recorded in volumes of a scientific society such as we have got, and there will be much more. That evidence is not for casual conversation, but serious study, although some of the conclusions arrived at may be stated.

“ ‘ I know that man is surrounded by other intelligences. If you once step beyond man there is no limit until you come to the Infinite Intelligence Himself. Once having got beyond man you go on and must go on until you come to God, but it is no strange land to which I am leading you. The Cosmos is one. We here on this planet are limited in certain ways, and blind to much that is going on ; but I tell you we are surrounded by beings working with us, co-operating, helping such as people in visions have had some perceptions of, and that which religion tells us saints and angels are, and that the Master Himself is helping us in is, I believe, literally true.’ ”

Some years ago the same scientist said “ that the boundary between the two worlds

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

is wearing thin in places, and like workmen engaged in boring a tunnel, we almost hear the noise of the pick-axes of our friends on the other side.”

Bearing this in mind, prepares us for these letters from the sister of Mrs. C—— who placed them at my disposal. They were communicated by means of automatic writing, and unfold startling corroboration of possible communication between living and dead. As Archdeacon Wilberforce expresses it :

“ It is my belief, nay, it is my absolute conviction, that the spirits of the beloved departed can and do help us, inspiring us with many a thought, an inspiration, a suggestion otherwise unaccountable.” If so, what happiness to those who have passed over when they can, at least, write to us those truths which we are yet too dull to see for ourselves.

“ I know you like collecting incidents or information concerning the life after death. I am sending you on extracts from the communications I occasionally get from my sister who passed over three years ago. Such an

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

affinity and friendship as ours could not be broken by death and I constantly feel her near me, helping me, and her automatic writing through my hand is exactly like receiving a letter from her. I give extracts only concerning the war, as those will be most useful to you.

“ On the 6th August, 1914. This war is full of pain and tragedy, yet the light it sends here is much purer and finer than I would have thought could come with carnage. You must not worry about it, the men have more thought of God in them in the horror and danger of life in battle, than they have when working ordinarily at home. We are used to help them, picking out our affinities by the lights of their auras. . . .

“ On the 21st August. Alfred and I are allowed (Alfred was her dead brother) to help comfort the dead soldiers who are coming here in thousands. No, we don't use language, light, colours, and thought expressions, *no word language* is needed here.

“ In September she told me that for some time before the war, special preparations had been going on in their life, for dealing

with large numbers of people, and that it was part of the plan that the *Empress of Ireland* had one hundred and forty Salvation Army officers on board when she sank. These were needed to form a good link between the military life and the religious life for the special inter-world duties consequent on the war. The experience of sudden death of the Salvationists (and of Stead and his companions earlier) made them specially valuable, and they are now used for the most important organisation and educational work in connection with a vast number of servicemen who are hastily flung into the next world.

“18th December. I share in comforting the lonely soldiers and their wives. I go to the wives on earth in the night-time, but we have to meet the soldiers in the daytime. Most of these are so tired emotionally that all they want is rest and quiet at first. Sometimes they are like mad people when they find they have no physical body, and we have to keep them as if imprisoned here. Then desolation, and loneliness and reaction come on them and we help in cheering them

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

up. We bring beautiful new sights, colours and inventions before them to distract their minds !

“ Nearly all are interested to find they could fly. Aviation has made such a tremendous impact on the minds of the combatants. It is a sign that human beings are now in touch with this life where flying is the natural means of moving about.

“ You remember how the Bible says : ‘ There was joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repented ’ ? That showed that the angels are not so joyous when he was bad. . . . Well, there was great joy here when Sir Oliver Lodge told all the world that he had talked with his deceased friends. It has opened up such a path. When we want to talk to you because of love, not to gratify our senses, it does not lower us any more than writing a letter in another hand does ; indeed, it helps us a great deal by satisfying a real natural love and desire for human companionship, *for we are not angels, we are human.* Only those who’ve been angels on earth are angels in heaven, and another kind of glorious Being

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

who glistens all over and has not to go through earth-life at all.”

Writing in October, she says : “ We are very busy now. We are both helping at the front some poor soldiers, indeed, some of them do not realise that they are dead and we have great trouble to prevent them frightening the other soldiers. Poor things, they are learning terrible lessons, but many of those Tommies have such thick spiritual skins that nothing short of war’s alarums and shells could pierce them and make them conscious of their souls or of a God. Others who are more sensitive suffer awfully, heaps of spirits here are pouring out strengthening thoughts to them. We work according to qualities shown by lights, irrespective entirely of nationalities.

“ The war will bring about great good, and the women will get their vote out of it too, but it will last a good while, over a year I think, but it is hard to reckon earth-time here. . . .”

Mrs. C—— wrote on May 19, giving more details of her sister’s letters.

“ But of what my sister wrote on the war

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

work was as follows: 'I was so glad to be able to help you at Blackpool.' (Where I had suddenly to speak on "Life After Death.") 'You could do a lot there, the people were thirsting for what you said. I gave you the information about the Red Cross Society here for healing souls. It is quite true. I am allowed to help in it on account of my hospital experience. It is wonderful how useful the lessons I learnt by illness are now becoming to me. As for Alfred, he is in his element helping young Tommies who have suffered agonies of pain like his.

" 'There are dreadful black clouds in front of England; things have got much more personal and passionate than before, and it will only be by suffering and tribulation that its conceit and hypocrisy and *selfishness* as a nation' (I felt she was alluding to the position *re* drink, etc., as compared with Russia) 'will be purged away.

" 'I came again into touch with dear old Mrs. Despard through you. What a source of pure light she is! She dissipated all your clouds by her spiritual sunshine. When she passes here I will join her Freedom League

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

at once—she will be a great heavenly general!

“ ‘ We do not call this “ Heaven ” or the “ Astral World ” ; it is another term, but I cannot get it through you now. “ Hades ” with a good feeling about it is the nearest I can get. ’ ”

“ Hades, with a good feeling ” is a very significant statement, coming from the other world and fully agreeing with the definition of “ Hades ” being unfortunately translated “ Hell,” just the same as the darker word “ Gehenna,” at the time of the authorised version of the old English word “ Hell ”—the note—the unseen, had not yet stiffened into the awful meaning that it has attained in our day. It was not a word set apart to designate the abode of the lost. It meant the “ Unseen Place,” the “ Covered Place.” In the south of England a thatcher who covers in a house is still called a “ hellier.”

“ In the English games of forfeits on the village green, “ The Hell ” is the hidden place where the girls run away to escape being kissed. You can see it had no awful meaning connected with it. It did not seem repulsive

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

to translate "Hades" by the English "Hell." It became misleading in later days, our conservative instincts prevent our altering the word in the Creed and have helped to perpetuate the error."

Refreshingly simple is Whittier's poem of the old monk, who spent his life in hard and manual work for others, and when dying, was told by his confessor that his work was over.

"Thou shalt sit down, have endless prayers, and wear a golden crown for ever and ever in Heaven."

"Ah," says the monk, "I'm a stupid old man, I'm dull at prayers, I can't keep awake. But I love my fellow-man and I would be good to the worst of them. I could not bear to sit among the lazy saints. I don't want your idle Heaven, I *want still* to work for others."

The confessor, in anger, left him, and in the night came the voice of the Lord tender and true :

"Never fear, for Heaven is love, and as God himself is love, thy work below shall be thy work above."

Though the subject of Life After Death is

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

in itself a solemn one, little bits of humour occasionally flash out, as the story of the old lady whose husband died, and for whom she mourned as became a devoted helpmate. She related how, night after night, her husband came to her in her dreams. At first she was frightened, and promptly hid her head under the bed-clothes, but after a time she came to regard these meetings as a certain nightly occurrence.

“All of a sudden, I thought I would speak to him,” she said, “for it seemed so unsociable not to try and cheer the poor fellow up in the next world, so I asked him what it felt like to be dead? Now, that’s a reasonable question, lord knows, seeing I’d paid the undertaker’s bills, and not one to put a body out, so I *was* surprised when he drew himself up, and smiled in a sort of superior way, and told me *he was not dead!*”

“Now that was a little too much to tell a sensible woman. ‘Not dead? and all this time *I’ve been wearing mourning for you!*’ I said to him.” The lady fairly bristled with indignation, and one wishes the end of this

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

conversation with the denizen of the other world was recorded. This story, by the way, is declared to be true, and comes, I think, from Canterbury.

The experience of Mrs. B—— is a fact, being told to her daughter and myself some years since. Her husband was a man a great deal older than herself, and her cousin, but, despite the disparity in age they lived a life of the utmost tranquillity and companionship, having been married over forty years when he died.

Like most of us, they had an insatiable craving to know if there was a life after death, and had, long, long ago, bound themselves by solemn promises that who should pass over first would return, and tell the other if there was a hereafter.

Poor Mrs. B—— mourned sincerely, for their companionship had been that of a lifetime, and there was a great void in her life. If she gave much thought to the old promise she did not say, but one night she awoke suddenly, to find her husband standing by the side of her bed. She lay there without speaking, for the sudden appearance startled

her. For a pause there was no sound, then he said to her, in natural, everyday tones :

“ I have come to tell you that there *is* a hereafter.”

That was all. He had kept his promise and his spirit was at rest. His wife never saw him again.

Descartes argues that “ the universality of an instinct justifies belief in that to which the instinct points. Not even primitive fetish worshippers believed in extinction.” Plato in the “ Phædon ” describes the debate amongst the philosophers of Greece, whether the relation of soul to body was that of harmony to a harp, or of a rower to a boat ? According to the first, the music must cease when the harp is broken. According to the latter, the rower may survive when the boat is wrecked ; and the whole testimony of the Greek tragedians proves that the latter was the accepted theory.

The metaphysical argument, of which Leibnitz is the main exponent, is based upon the indestructibility of an uncompounded essence. He taught that the ego of man was a substance—ousia—and that no substance

could perish except by the miracle of annihilation.

THE RESTLESS SPIRIT OF P—— J——

An Actual Happening

A certain author began a book, one of the many memoirs of eighteenth-century life, the hero of which was a man well known for his splendid fighting qualities, and also described by his contemporaries as being exceedingly quarrelsome. From the moment the first few lines were penned everything was at cross purposes. The book hung fire, a friend struck a fusee to light a cigarette, and the head flew off red hot, straight into the author's eye, necessitating a complete rest for that organ for some time; private affairs ran amuck, the collection of "ana" was exceedingly expensive and difficult to procure, and so forth.

This dragged on over a period of two years, then the book was published. It was splendidly reviewed—and sold badly. There were many complications which nearly led to "the little rift" between publisher and author—

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

an exceedingly hot-tempered individual—becoming a chasm.

Then a friend said to the author, “ Mrs. ——— says you are very brave to write a book about that man, for whoever does always has endless annoyance and bother. I suppose you know they say his ghost walks at ——— ? ”

Now the subject of this book, like so many men, had a deep and lasting *affaire de cœur*, and his love survived him, but completely disappeared shortly after his death, and no portrait of her is obtainable.

One day the author and a friend were doing “ automatic writing,” and asked many questions as to the fate of Mme. de T——, obtaining various answers, and when they enquired her burial-place, were directed somewhere in the environs of Paris, but told that all trace of the cross marking her resting-place had long since been destroyed by fire !

The author, smarting under many wrongs, asked : “ Why do you cause me so much annoyance ? What can I do, tell me if there is anything you want, and I’ll get it for you ? ” and swiftly came the words, “ P——

FROM THE OTHER SIDE

wants a picture of A——,” and cleverly sketched a charming little oval miniature of a lady in powder and patches, set in a frame of tiny brilliants.

The author promised P—— his picture, should such a thing exist, and from that moment all trouble has ceased.

It is most interesting, for the “writing” described how they used to play on the harpsichord, which it drew very quaintly, also adding a few notes of the music, saying, “we sang in English,” and “I used to go to her when it was dark . . . and she greeted me by putting her hands on my shoulders. . . .”

There has always been a doubt as to whether a secret marriage existed between the lovers, and in reply to the question, came the simple reply: “We loved each other too much. . . .”

The “medium”—non-professional—said she never experienced such an overwhelming sense of intense sadness in her life, and threw down the pencil, declaring she could not go on!

It seems tragically pathetic that the

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

spirit of this man who died suddenly without priest or friend to close his eyes, should wander in the dark realms between the two worlds, ever seeking for the woman he loved, and pleading to a chance stranger for her portrait.

CHAPTER V

INVISIBLE HELPERS

INVISIBLE Helpers may be simply defined as those souls or spirits, who, through love and affection, come to our aid in times of peril.

Death is not necessary to enable these Invisible Helpers to aid those in need, for occultists can, at will, go as they deem fit and calm the grieved, or cheer the weary during those hours we call sleep.

St. Paul describes the condition of man as soul, body, and spirit. "What is my ME?" "My ME" is a consciousness which feels, acts, thinks. "There is the physical house, and the spirit house. We are billeted in all three at once. Not that we shall have a soul, or spirit given to us, as we have them now."

The idea of human nature as a Triad may be gathered from the simple Anglo-Saxon

sāwol—meaning “blessed, happy, radiant,” and gives a definition of “soul” as “the radiant one.” “Man” is connected with “mind,” from Sanskrit “*manu.*” Anglo-Saxon is a root “*ma*”—to measure, and conveys the suggestion of one who measures, or geometrisises. The Anglo-Saxon body—abode or dwelling-place of the thinker or his instrument; that which does his “bod,” or his bidding.

We have long been told by the “specialists in things spiritual that man possessed more than one body, and that they do separate, break apart, to some degree, under certain conditions; these conditions usually being Trance, Sleep, and Death.” For “we are not body alone, but mind and soul as well, also consciousness.”

Such “appearances,” as those of Invisible Helpers, are “now among the well-established of those phenomena. Hundreds of cases have been collected and investigated, and the fact is without question, that their appearances can take, and have taken place, particularly at the moment of death.”

INVISIBLE HELPERS

That this idea of the soul, or spirit, leaving the body temporarily in sleep or trance is the belief of most nations, is shown by the reluctance of savages to arouse the sleeping man abruptly, lest his spirit, wandering untrammelled in the Elysian fields, should be unable to take up its earth-abode in obedience to the hasty summons.

It is intensely interesting, the investigation of these Invisible Helpers, to learn that there is no barrier for them, no boundary of time, no limit of space which they cannot cross at will. That "at first these occultists work in groups of ten, then those more advanced in sevens, then three and a half, and then alone. The Church of England helpers in fives, and the Roman Catholic Church helpers in eights and fours. Those who know their work in the invisible world are able to make use of a certain force and energy, *liberated* (so to speak, made ready for use) by the prayers and masses for the dead, of the Catholic Church. Little comes from the Anglican, and none from the Nonconformist. Twice, when Father —— was celebrating the Mass for the Dead in his oratory, a

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

clairvoyant *saw the energy*, like a sea of light in which the spirits were bathing, and also, she saw an enormous number of arms thrust out to seize what they could of it, showing how intense was the need. We can each of us provide some of that energy by our prayers for the dead.”

A well-known occultist describes the extraordinarily occult aspect of a battlefield, and how “an angry Tommy seizes the first dead German he can find, and how they continue fighting, locked in deadly combat, and *by the swirl of their emotions* they set up a sort of whirlpool in the matter of the Astral plane, the particles of which, forced into very rapid vibration, form a sort of shell around them, like a bubble. Under the direction of probably one of the Masters the group of ten surround this bubble, concentrating their thoughts upon the combatants inside, until *they pierce the bubble*, which collapses, and immediately the two pass into a state of unconscious sleep, to awake after a period of rest on a higher plane of the Astral world.”

The following story is absolutely true, and

INVISIBLE HELPERS

more than interesting on that account, as it shows how the occult forces can be directed by those experienced enough to control them.

THE STRANGE STORY OF MME. DE T——

A Belgian officer lay desperately wounded in one of the Red Cross hospitals in a coast town, “somewhere in England.” So critical was his condition that the doctors gave him until the next day, at the same time, to live; just twenty-four hours in which to take leave of this beautiful world, and—if human means could accomplish it—to see once more his wife. Coupled with the pain of a mortal wound, and grief for the sorrows of his country, was the all-dominant craving to know if his wife had escaped the clutches of the terrible Huns and reached these hospitable shores! If so, where was she, and where was their child?

Shortly before the crisis of his illness some of his brother officers had written to the Belgian Consul for news of the

missing wife and child, who were borne along in that great army of refugees sweeping across the Channel, swallowed up, and cared for by sympathisers as they landed. But the tremendously overworked staff of the Belgian Consulate was three weeks behind with its correspondence; there was no chance of a letter being opened until its turn came, and long before then in the course of human events the dying man would have ceased to care for the happenings of this world.

The practical way of tracing the lady was to appeal to the officials in charge of the refugees on their arrival. So a sympathetic Theosophist started off to interview an obliging but terribly overworked individual, who threw up his hands in despair at being asked to give particulars of any one woman and child who had passed through the port several weeks ago! For, he stated, though they were supposed to register, many of the Belgians and Flemings departed without any record being made of them, as they did not comply with the formalities required, and the press of work was so overwhelming that

INVISIBLE HELPERS

those in charge had no time to see that the regulation was enforced.

“It is like looking for a needle in a haystack, Madame,” he told the enquirer wearily. “See the numbers we have here, and they are not even classified alphabetically.”

Taking up one of the large books, he opened haphazard, glanced down the page, started, turned pale.

“What name did you say?” he asked breathlessly.

“Mme. de T——,” replied the other.

Half-automatically he held up the page, and there in cramped characters, half-way down, stood the words: “Mme. de T——, Belgian, and child. Passed the night at the Local Committee Rooms, passed on to London Central Committee Rooms next day,” and there was a date.

It was now seven o'clock, of a damp and dreary evening . . . and the dying man could not live beyond one o'clock the following day. What was to be done? Telephone through to the Central Committee in London? The trunk calls were hard to get, and harder to hold, at that time. But the

patient official, inspired by the needs of the situation, which had been graphically explained to him, gallantly strove for half an hour to achieve the desired end. The line was blocked. Then a second and a third effort was made, with the same depressing result ; and all the time the precious minutes flowing fast into eternity. Finally, the attempt had to be abandoned as impossible.

Here occurs the unusual. After a rapid mental survey of the situation so sternly controlled by the hand of time, the lady interested determined that, as physical means were unavailing, there must be recourse to the occult, and proceeded to put the Mills of the Gods in action. First, she scribbled and sent advertisements to the *Daily Mail* and the *Anglo-Belge*, to the effect that "If Mme. de T——saw the advertisement she should *immediately* communicate with the Red Cross at ——." Then four people, who knew it is possible in sleep to communicate with others, decided to do their best to trace Mme. de T—— in their sleep-life, and, as it were, to become themselves "Invisible

116

INVISIBLE HELPERS

Helpers.” They decided to find Mme. de T—— and to impress upon her, *as an imperative necessity*, that she should, immediately on awakening, buy one of these two papers, according to the theory that “promises given in sleep, notwithstanding absence of memory, act as an apparently voluntary impulse from which there is no escape. What may seem to us our free determination in our waking state may often be the result of promises given in sleep.”

So the four helpers set out that night to find Mme. de T——in sleep, trusting that her eyes would fall on the advertisements the following day. Their efforts proved successful beyond the wildest expectation, for the early morning brought to light *three Madames and seven Miss de T——s*, with the alarming news that all were on their way to the Red Cross hospital! A kindly priest who had seen the advertisement, and knew from his work among the refugees many of them by name, had done his best, and this was the result!

But it must be told—though this is truth

and not fiction—that the real wife, leading her child by the hand, arrived ; and in time to hear the last words of the martyr to his country's cause . . . and there was sympathy in every heart when the old priest led the sobbing, deeply veiled widow from the side of him to whom the cares of earth meant no more. . . .

Some of the other De T——s told of the strange impulse which had induced them to buy papers, which, in the case of the *Daily Mail*—as they spoke no English—they had never bought before in their lives.

It is a curious story, perhaps one of coincidence, perhaps its chief merit is that of simple truth.

The following letter, which Lady F.-R. very kindly allows me to use, is from her sister, Miss M. E., whose benevolent work with her barge *Julia* is known far and wide where a canal can flow.

INVISIBLE HELPERS

AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM

BARGE *Julia*,
Feb. 18

“ Nothing to write properly, but I have got a chance to send a note through quickly, so here goes !

“ Life palpitates with interest here, and we are as busy as beavers. We took two enormous motor-lorries to P—— filled with food and clothing for the Countess ——’s hospital. She has crowds of these poor refugee women and little children, all ill with diphtheria, and poor things, they have nothing, rich and poor alike. Countess —— almost cried with gratitude ; she told me that we certainly had come in answer to prayer. She had opened her window and cried for help to the heavens (these are her words), and two hours later her larders were filled from a source she did not even know existed. We shall be able to help her enormously ; it is so pitiful to see the wan faces of these poor little children, and her work is so noble and devoted, doubly so, that it has none of the varied interests of

our life, and she is isolated in the dreariest sort of place only about five miles from the fighting line. If you ever see anyone doubtful about what to send us, tell your friends condensed milk—one cannot have enough. Thank Heaven, I bought ten thousand more tins in Calais. . . .”

This was indeed a most practical and prompt response to that prayer “cried for help to the heavens.”

CHAPTER VI

DREAMS

SINCE the beginning of time we have believed in dreams. All through history we read of dreams and the omens they contained. The priests of old Greece and Egypt derived a large part of their revenue from the interpretation thereof, the "Oracle" speaking in terms ambiguous enough to be applied as the enquirer desired. The Roman soothsayer wielded a tremendous power, even among the better class, though it is a question whether superstition was any more rife than to-day, when it is really a matter of astonishment to see the extraordinary variety and number of good-luck talismans displayed in the windows of well-known shops.

The Chaldeans were the masters of astral theology, and their knowledge of the omens of the heavens and dreams was consulted

by the mighty ones of the earth. Nebuchadnezzar, "resting in his house and flourishing in his palace" saw a dream "which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

"Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of my dream.

"Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them, but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof," and Daniel had his "Vision," of the rams and the goat and many other things.

The late Andrew Lang in his "Dreams and Ghosts" says: "In dreams time and space are annihilated and two severed lovers may be made happy. In dreams, amidst a grotesque confusion of things remembered and things forgot, we see the events of the past (I have been at Culloden fight and at the Siege of Troy): we are present in places remote; we behold the absurd; we con-

DREAMS

verse with the dead ; and we may even (let us say by strange coincidence) forecast the future. All these things, except the last, are familiar to everybody who dreams. It is also certain that similar but more vivid false experiences may be produced at the word of the hypnotiser, in persons under the hypnotic sleep.

Now the ghostly is nothing but the experience when men are awake or *apparently* awake, "of the every-night phenomena of dreaming."

As long ago as the third century of the Christian era, Iamblichus wrote that, "There is nothing unworthy of belief in what you have been told concerning the sacred sleep and seeing by means of dreams. I explain it thus ; the soul has a two-fold life, the higher and the lower. In sleep the soul is liberated from the constraint of the body and enters as an emancipated being on its divine life of intelligence. The night of the body is the daytime of the soul."

But what is dreaming? To the initiated there is no "dreaming" ; there is no aimless wandering in the areas of unreality. At his

bidding the astral body, sent definitely on its mission through the hours between darkness and dawn, fulfils the behests, and returns from those worlds beyond the infinite to incorporate in its physical body. The American Indians will never suddenly wake the sleeper, lest the spirit could not quickly take up its earth-dwelling. Alas, that other races are less considerate, and one is dragged from nebulous and sweet wanderings by astral "rocks where the sea-foam splashes," to the sordid realities of this life. Recalled so suddenly that a voice, long unheard, lingers in the dreamer's ears. The loves of other lives are sweet in their elusive intangibility, and who shall deny that the astral life called "dreaming" is not a source of joy?

In the light of scientific research by which it is possible to explain even the improbable, who calls "Peter Ibbetson" mad? Who shall deny him his "dream life"? His "Duchess of Towers" and his childhood at the quaint French school are equally real. How remarkable the link of affinity between him and "Mary, Duchess of Towers," to live

DREAMS

as they did, that ideal "dream life" in which they ever remained young! How tremendous his powers of concentration to live that life without break or interruption.

What we have carelessly been taught to call "warnings" and "presentiments" are merely the, can we say, gossip and foreknowledge collected by us in our astral wanderings, where such things are known long before they materialise, and those who have loved and cared for us still watch over our well-being.

Sceptical, perhaps, Andrew Lang wrote: "But even these wild guesses cannot cover a dream which correctly reveals events of the future: events necessarily not known to any finite mind of the living or the dead, and too full of detail for an explanation by aid of chance coincidences."

Could it be explained by telepathy, which Bacon described as "Sympathy between two distant minds, sympathy so strong that one communicates with the other without using the regular channels of the senses." Even Izaak Walton, in a moment of mental unbending from the "Compleate Angler"

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

wrote that "If two lutes are strung to an exact harmony, and one is struck, the other sounds." Of course, as every one knows in the case of the lutes there are endless vibrations sent into space by the lightest touch; but one knows little of these vibrations of sympathy which flow from brain to brain on the waves of space . . . perhaps from heart to heart.

There are innumerable and scientific theories to explain our dreams advanced by those in whose minds the material must account for everything, some of my most interesting experiences being scoffed at, and labelled "liver" by a sceptical doctor of large Indian experience! But why, indeed, should we accept explanations from those who are no better qualified—if as well as ourselves—to account for the unaccountable? Some of us are born clairvoyant, some clairaudient, we differ in our psychic side as greatly as in our features or faces: why must we then be judged by the rule-of-three standard and be sentenced by the dry-as-dusts of intolerance?

That there are families to whom certain

DREAMS

dreams inevitably portend disaster, no one denies. If we are not what we are, and only a part of the real self is on this plane, the symbol which we call a dream is used to warn us in the form we most easily understand. There are many to whom the loss of a tooth in a dream means a death, the condition of the tooth indicating the age or illness, the grief at its loss, the sorrow felt proportionate to the passing of the friend.

In the meaning of dreams, dogs are friends, eggs or fish, money. "Dream of the dead hear from the living" is a cant word in many households, as much as the belief in parts of Kent and Sussex that a robin hopping into the house foretells a death.

Another dream, which from personal experience has proved its truth, is that about rats and mice and theft. If any member of the household dreams of a rat or a mouse, we are certain, within the next few days, to hear of some petty theft on the place, and there are, of course, several dreams which warn of sickness. For some unexplained reason dreams of priest or church are never

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

lucky, generally being the forerunner of deceit, and there are many more, such as being kissed by a woman, which predict deceit, while kisses from a man are lucky ! Why should this be ?

It is difficult to “bring through our dreams as clearly as one could wish, and many would have us believe that, on waking, the brain automatically changes the symbols and registers events differently from those we have enacted. But there are innumerable dreams which on waking we can describe clearly and with detail. Others are vague and incoherent, and often we cannot remember a dream at all until hours later, when some chance word or flash of memory recalls the experience of the previous night.

Some time ago, Archdeacon Wilberforce, taking as his text “Seeing Him Who is Invisible,” said that in the New Testament two Greek words with a distinct difference in meaning, have been used in the same sentence and translated in that one word “see” ; one Greek word being “Theorite” : “to see with the physical organs, the other Greek word “Opsesthe” : to see indepen-

DREAMS

dently of the physical organs. It is used in the sight of the genuine clairvoyant, the mystic, and the metaphysician, and thirty times it has been used in the New Testament in contradiction to the seeing of the physical sight. *It is this sight that we use in sleep, or dream body.*”

Under the name of “Dreams” are carelessly huddled those messages from a world beyond “that bourne from which no man returneth.”

There are at this moment, a large number of Theosophists so well versed in the occult as to “bring through” at will their experiences on the astral plane, and they have most kindly given me the following stories.

“A propos of ‘bringing through’ of dreams, a friend of mine I saw at K—— last week, woke up two or three nights ago with such a *strong smell of gas* that she went so far as to see if there wasn’t an escape of gas in some room. This followed on top of a curious dream in which she had been at the front dipping men’s respirators in puddles!!! the only water available.”

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Another writes, "I have myself twice seen what a dead husband and a dead son were doing, and it comforted the wife and mother awfully. In each case they were total strangers to me, and in each case it was just what they had said they wanted to do if they got through the war all right. In one case it was a man who was going round the world exploring it! with all his friends who had been killed too."

The fascination of flying has always exercised a tremendous hold over the mind of man, even before Icarus trusted himself to the wings and wax which proved his downfall. Though few until lately have experienced the actual feeling of flight, it has always been known to us in dreams.

"Dream flight is not usually the sustained flight of a bird or an insect, and the dreamer hardly ever imagines he is borne high in the air. Horace Hutchinson in 'Dreams and Their Meanings,' states that all of those he has asked about the matter hardly ever made high flights in dreams, but one almost always flies low with a skimming motion, slightly, but only slightly, above the heads

DREAMS

of the pedestrians. Dreams of flying are among the earliest to attract attention. Cicero appears to refer to dreams of flying. St. Jerome mentioned that he was subject to them. Lysanias remarked 'that in dreams we fly with wings, and view the world from afar.' Cervantes accurately described the dream of flying. No dreams are so vivid and so convincing as dreams of flying, none leave behind them so strong a sense of the reality of the experience. Raffaëlli, the eminent French painter who is subject to the dreaming experience of floating in the air, confesses that it is so convincing that he has jumped out of bed on awakening and tried to attempt to repeat it. 'I need not tell you,' he adds, 'I have never been able to succeed.'

"In hysterical ecstasy it is well known that the sense of rising and floating in the air has often prominently appeared. St. Therese occasionally found herself lifted above the ground and was fearful that this sign of divine favour would attract attention! Also, St. Joseph of Cupertino,

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Christina the Wonderful, St. Ida of Louvain, and others were permitted to experience this sensation. Piérou in his *Contributions à la Psychologie des Mourant*, says that to rise, to fall, to glide away has often been the last conscious sensation recalled by those who seemed to be dying, but who have afterwards been brought back to life. Those rescued from drowning, for instance, have sometimes found that the last conscious sensation was a beatific feeling of being borne upwards. Piérou has also noted this sensation at the moment of death from disease in a number of cases, usually accompanied by a sense of well-being. The cases he describes were mostly tuberculous and included individuals of both sexes and atheistic as well as religious belief. In all the last conscious sensation to which conscious expression was given, was one of flying or moving upwards. In some, death was painful, in others, peaceful. In one case a girl died clasping the iron bars of the bed, in horror of being borne upwards. Piérou associated this sensation with the similar sensation of rising and floating com-

DREAMS

mon in dreams, and with the feeling of moving upwards and resting on the air experienced by persons in the ecstatic state. In this way it comes about that out of dreams and of dreamlike waking states, one of the most permanent of human spiritual conceptions has been evolved. To float, to rise into the air, to fly up to heaven, has always seemed to man to be the final climax of spiritual activity."

Small wonder is it that with flying playing such an important part in the war, those who have fallen at the front are still eager to explore its possibilities. A friend "brought through" this dream which is unusual.

"I saw one man who had passed over having a lovely time with Hamel (they had been friends it seems, while living), and they were trying to be 'Invisible Helpers' to our airmen and to guide them to where Zeppelin shadows were, and to impress on them danger, where any. Also, these two friends, with a third, were flying over the Dardanelles, and seeing how things were for themselves."

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Much used to be questioned which is now listened to patiently, and much more will be revealed in the next few years. In the meantime, let us dream—if dream it is—for “Our little life is rounded with a sleep. . . .”

CHAPTER VII

ON REINCARNATION

THE doctrine that, at death the soul leaves the body, passing into another living creature, man, animal or plant, can be traced back into the mists of antiquity.

It is derived from the universal savage beliefs : (1) That Man has a Soul, connected in some wonderful way with the breath, which can be separated from his material body ; temporarily in sleep, permanently in death.

(2) That animals and plants have souls, and are possessed of human passions in a degree.

(3) That souls can be transferred from one organism to another.

It is believed by the Indians of certain tribes that as “ the clan sprang from the totem, so each clansman at death resumes the totem form ” ; while in Thibet the soul

of the Dalai-Lama passes into the body of an infant born nine months after his death.

Herodotus errs in ascribing to the Egyptians belief in metempsychosis, and attributing to them ideas current in Greece, and we know now that they merely thought certain favoured souls could, in the other world, assume at times the forms of birds or flowers.

“ In India, on the contrary, the doctrine was thoroughly established from ancient times ; not from the most ancient, as it is not in the Vedan, but onward from the Upanishades. In them it is used for moral retribution : he who kills a Brahman is, after a long progress through dreadful hells, to be born as a dog, a pig, ass, camel.”

It is difficult to find authentic record of the belief in metempsychosis which first appeared in Greece about 600 B.C. : on the wild frontiers of Thrace. Its legendary founder, Orpheus, is said to have taught that “ Soul and body are united by a compact unequally binding on either : the soul is divine, immortal and aspires to freedom, while the

REINCARNATION

body holds it in fetters as a prisoner. Death dissolves this compact, but only to reimprison the liberated soul after a short time: for the wheel of birth revolves inexorably. Thus the soul continues its journey, alternating between a separate unrestrained existence and fresh reincarnation, round the wide circle of necessity, as the companion of many bodies of men and animals. To these unfortunate prisoners Orpheus proclaims the message of liberation, that they stand in need of grace of redeeming gods and of Dionysus in particular, and calls them to God by ascetic piety of life and self-purification: the purer their lives the higher will be their next reincarnation, until the soul has completed the spiral ascent of destiny to live for ever in God from whom it comes.”

Pherecydes is the earliest Greek thinker in connexion with whom metempsychosis is mentioned; Pythagoras, its great and famous exponent, is said to have been his pupil; but to Plato, who embodied the doctrine in some of his greatest works, we owe the fact that it is not merely “a matter of curious

investigation for the anthropologist and student of folk-lore.”

“ In the eschatological myth which closes the *Republic* he tells the story how Er, the son of Armenius, miraculously returned to life on the twelfth day after death and recounted the secrets of the other world. ‘ After death,’ he said, ‘ he went with others to the place of Judgment and saw the souls returning from heaven and purgatory, and proceeded with them to a place where they chose new lives, human and animal.’

“ ‘ He saw the soul of Orpheus changing into a swan, Thamyras becoming a nightingale, musical birds choosing to be men, the soul of Atalanta choosing the honours of an athlete. Men were seen passing into animals and wild and tame animals changing into each other.’ After their choice the souls drank of Lethe and then shot away like stars to their birth.”

According to Plato, the number of souls was fixed and could not be exceeded, so “ birth was never the creation of a soul, but only a transmigration from one body to another.”

REINCARNATION

Rather amusing is the bit of classical gossip, where, in a lost passage of his "Annals"—a Roman history in verse—the writer, Ennius, declares that he saw Homer in a dream, and that the poet had assured him "that the same soul which had animated both poets had once belonged to a peacock!"

We hear so much of reincarnation to-day, and the legend of "Drake's Drum" is making many think. On the red cliffs of the Devon coast there is no doubt that it is Drake himself, who, in the guise of Jellicoe, is commanding the Grand Fleet of England. A hundred years ago he appeared in Nelson, who swept the enemy before him, and fell gloriously at Trafalgar.

The fisherfolk on the Devon coast have no doubt they have heard "Drake's Drum" throbbing as it hangs on the sea-wall at Plymouth, heard it calling England to wake to the realities of war: heard it as they rowed over the dark waters of Plymouth Sound with its memories of Armada and Drake, and all the brilliant men who made England's name on the seas.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

As it runs in Mr. Alfred Noyes's quotable poem :

*Do 'e know who Nelson was ?
That poor little shrivelled form
With the patch on his eye and pinned-up
sleeve,
And the soul of a North Sea storm ?*

*He wasn't the man you think !
His patch was a dern disguise !
For he knew they'd find him out, d'you see ?
If they looked him in both his eyes.*

*Nelson was just a ghost !
You may laugh, but the Devonshire men
They knew that he'd come when England
called .
And they know that he'll come again.*

and the old sailor goes on to relate how when Drake lay dying " aboard his ship, in Nombre Dios Bay " and the " scent of the foreign flowers " made him long for a whiff of tar in old Plymouth Harbour, and he was uneasy about the fate of England for which

REINCARNATION

he had ever fought so gallantly. And he tells his

*pirates listening round,
With their crimson doublets and jewelled
swords,
That flashed as the sun went down,*

to take his drum home to the country he knew he could never live to see, and hang it on the sea-wall at Plymouth, and if England wants him living or dead, to strike it and he'll

*Rise from the darkness under the sea,
Ten thousand miles away,*

and come to her aid. And

*They sailed away in the dark
To the dear little isle that they knew :
And they hung the drum on the old sea-wall
The same as he told 'em to—*

and how, in the days of Nelson, it was heard to beat, and the fishermen saw a ghostly white ship sailing past one night, with the spirit of Francis Drake animating the slender form of Nelson on to victory, as to-day, it is the universal belief among the Devonshire

men, that " Jack Jellicoe " is the reincarnation of the great sailor of Elizabeth's days. And this belief is corroborated by the highest of the Theosophical leaders.

Believers in reincarnation proclaim that the King of the Belgians is the reincarnation of William the Silent, who freed his country from the yoke of the Spaniard, drove Alva from the Netherlands, breaking the power of intolerant Spain over the low countries of Europe. And there is a strong resemblance between the photographs of the present king and old prints of William the Silent.

St. Paul said " that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap," which is expressing in different language the meaning of Karma, the belief that there is " a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will," that there is a retribution which shall punish the wicked.

There are more than whispers to-day, that the terrible barbarities inflicted on the Belgians by the Germans are but the retribution of their Karma, for the much-heralded atrocities in the Congo. And the cruelty of the lower-class Belgians towards animals

REINCARNATION

has long aroused protest from those concerned for the welfare of our dumb friends. It is regrettable to say that these protests have met with little or no response from the lethargic officials in power. If we allow the present plight of Belgium to be but retribution—or Karma—what a terrible, swift punishment it has been! But what a pity it should bring so much sorrow to a good and blameless king.

I heard a rather novel argument the other day. The English Red Cross hospital at L——, somewhere in France, has been, from the first, a source of great care and worry to those in charge, though this is not mentioned; and the speaker attributes this to the fact, that long, long ago, the city was sacked by the famous Black Prince! A course of action that undoubtedly made him unpopular with the inhabitants, so now the elementals and the reincarnated ones are doing their best to pay the long-owed debt!

The same man who related this story is quite guileless of medical knowledge, but offered his services to one of the medical

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

corps, and went to the front, where, it seems, he developed extraordinary aptitude for operations of the most difficult kind. He has since been asked by surgeons in charge to operate on cases which they considered too intricate to trust even to advanced medical students. It all reads like a fable, but it would be interesting to know who he had been in another incarnation.

The affinity of nations is worth considering from the standpoint of reincarnation. It is curious that an Italian diplomat declares his countrymen are better understood by the British than by any other race, giving as his theory that the cause is long reaching, dating, in fact, from the time when Britain was a Roman colony and when by custom, law and conquest, the Romans impressed their characteristics on the conquered race. And is it not a trait of England that she possesses to perfection that talent for colonisation which distinguished ancient Rome? It is also stated by the same diplomat, that there has never been war between England and Italy.

The charioteer of ancient Rome is said to

REINCARNATION

be reincarnated in the motorist and ubiquitous taxi-man ; in fact, the examples could be produced *ad infinitum* to illustrate the subject, as every one has some pet story to bear out the truth of what they wish to demonstrate.

There is a plump little lady who declares herself the reincarnation of Louis XIV, calling attention to her nose—which she asserts is very similar to that of the *grand monarque*, her passionate love of building houses, of planning gardens, and high red heels ! She solemnly vows, while in the middle of each new architectural tribulation, that never again will she undertake anything of the sort, and her friends breathe with relief, only to find, on the next occasion of their going to her house, that some little thing has been undertaken which quite upsets the running arrangements of the establishment, and for which profuse apologies are offered. She confesses herself, that she simply *cannot* escape from this mania, and would be unutterably happy if she could build a new house every year.

As for furnishing, she would like to have

about a hundred rooms, opening one out of the other like the old French palaces, and each room furnished in a different style, with everything of the *époque* correct in minutest detail. Of course her taste runs to French architecture and furnishings of this period, and she has puzzled many a dealer by her knowledge of little "isms" of which often the expert is ignorant. But, unlike the *roi soleil*, she is master of her garden, and no le Nôtre intimidates her by his awesome presence, and the garden—planned by herself—is as French as French can be. She admits the greatest commiseration for the great Louis and wonders if he had often to wrestle with the problem of dilatory workmen which at times wracks her soul? And deep are her sympathies with the story of all those wonderful silver vases and richly enamelled silver tubs and boxes in which grew the orange trees and shrubs in the *salle des glaces*, which he was obliged by the exigencies of war to throw into the melting-pot, to the lasting loss of art! And all the tables and stools of the same precious metal, and the *chefs-d'œuvre* which the hand of the

REINCARNATION

great Cellini had wrought so lovingly—all had to pour into the ruthless crucible of war, never to emerge again! *Hélas!*

Some of her friends suggest that she is the reincarnation of Bess of Hardwick, also noted for her insatiable love of building, but the little lady shakes her head, and triumphantly points out the fact that Tudor architecture is to her a *pays inconnu*, and will not be enticed from her beloved Louis and his gorgeous masterpieces.

More of us seem to be reincarnations from the French than from any other nationality, and a curious example is that of a lady, logical and level-headed in all respects—though considered by her friends as extremely psychic—who has an intense distaste, really amounting to horror, at seeing another woman's hair dressed! All her life she has felt the same aversion, though never, until recently, when the air is full of the talk of psychic things, has she thought that perhaps in her last incarnation she may have been the unwilling witness of one of those awful scenes, where the trembling hair-dresser was compelled by the mob to powder and arrange the hair of the

beautiful Princesse de Lambelle, stuck on a pike, and slowly dripping blood on the unfortunate wretch whose terror made him so clumsy as to call forth imprecations and threats from his tormentors.

There may be something in this, for she is always taken for French by all who meet her, and has an affinity with the Paris of pre-revolutionary days that is startling. So strong is the influence of the French incarnation, that the other day a friend said to her, "My sister and I always think you should have lived in France a hundred years ago, you don't seem to belong to to-day."

She lives surrounded with old French furniture, and from a child could read old French with more facility than old English, though told by her governesses this was extremely difficult for anyone not born French to do. She was the despair of this series of worthy females, for no threats or coaxings could force her to read her Latin with anything but the very strongest French accent; Oxford and Cambridge being ignored as if non-existent. . . . Any words with the "lou" sound, if left to her own

REINCARNATION

sweet will, she pronounced glibly to sound like “loo,” though the accepted way might be as “now.”

And another curious trait is, that she has a dreadful and unreasoning terror of being on foot alone in the streets of Paris. In England she comes and goes at all hours, she drives her own motor, and is an all-round good sport to whom nerves are an unknown quantity, but, once alone in the streets of Paris, she patters swiftly to the shelter of the nearest taxi if her carriage is not available, and sighs with relief when the slam of the door separates her from the passer-by. What is the meaning of it ?

No less psychically interesting is the story of a young Army officer, who has such a horror of *snow* that a snowstorm is to him the most exquisite torture. Being a keen Theosophist he has investigated every avenue which could lead to possible explanation, and has, I believe, linked himself up with a certain Count de ——, captain of dragoons in the armies of the Empire under Napoleon, who was left for dead in the retreat from Moscow, suffering frightfully from cold and exposure.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Papers in the French War Office are said to corroborate the experiences of the Captain Count de ——, who, however, recovered and lived for some years after his fighting days were over.

But the possibilities of reincarnation are by no means exhausted, nor are they even explored to the fullest extent, though the earnest student sees each day some fresh development of the belief, which, under a multitude of names, has long animated the minds of philosophers and thinkers ever seeking after the truth and light.

CHAPTER VIII

ON REPERCUSSION

THOROUGHLY to understand repercussion, it would, in the words of a well-known psychic writer, "probably be necessary to comprehend the laws of sympathetic vibration on more planes than one," so we must accept without attempting too subtle an analysis the stories here set down, for it is inexpedient to cavil at the wonders science is slowly unveiling, solely because its facts are too great for the untrained mind to grasp. To the doubting Thomas there is ever a loophole for question, to the less sceptical, perhaps more psychic and highly educated, tales of the unknown world make, from the scientific point of view, a powerful and irrefutable appeal.

That injuries received in sleep, or on the astral plane, should be "brought through," and show as bruises or scars the following

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

day may seem wonderful, for in many ways the idea is startling and sudden at first hearing. But, if one delves into old wives' tales and superstitions, who can account for, or in any way explain, "Dead Men's Pinches"? *i.e.* where the victim, who has retired without blemish on her alabaster skin, wakes to find disfiguring bruises on her wrist or arm, as the case may be, just far enough apart to indicate a good "pinch" from ghostly fingers while she slept.

Science is just beginning to allow itself to take cognisance of phenomena and so-called superstitions, which have steadily been derided for centuries, and many of these facts, long believed in and noticed by the ignorant, now at last receive the *cachet* of scientific approval. Statements are made calmly in the light of to-day, which a few centuries, or less, ago would have brought the speaker within uncomfortable radius of the ducking-stool or stake, according to sex, custom, and clime. So, once we believe, there will be no further bar on progress, no limitation to what may be achieved with the aid of science and toleration. For those

REPERCUSSION

who live long enough, it will be interesting to see what the next half-century brings forth.

The following case of repercussion, from the personal experience of Mr. Rupert Gauntlett, which he very kindly allows me to use, is corroborated by many people who witnessed the injuries received by him in sleep, and should prove of deep interest to the psychic investigator.

Extract from a Letter written by Mr. Gauntlett

“ The case of repercussion about which you asked me to write occurred in the early days of the war, when most people interested in these matters were ‘ bringing through ’ recollections of actual experiences. I remember clearly on the evening of the night in question going home to bed in the best of health, and with not the slightest suggestion of physical strain in any way that would account for the happenings of the night. I had dropped off to sleep and was conscious of being intimately associated with a battle scene which I took to be ‘ somewhere in

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

France.’ All around me were wounded men, in whom I was apparently deeply interested. So much was this the case that in one instance the sight of a man lying on the field with his leg practically shot off, induced such spasm of mental anguish and emotional agony in myself as to bring me back rapidly to my physical body, lying in bed in London, and I awoke saying to myself, ‘ My leg has been shot away.’

“ I lay there in bed for some minutes trying to collect myself, feeling sure that my leg was gone, and in great agony, so much so that beads of cold perspiration stood out all over me, alternated by periods of intense fever. Gradually I calmed down sufficiently to realise exactly what had happened, and that I was the victim of that repercussion which is so often spoken about amongst occult students. I tried in vain to get up as I was very anxious to see exactly what had happened to my leg, which I could now begin to feel again, but until six o’clock in the morning I found it was utterly impossible for me to move. I then managed to crawl out of bed and found my

154

REPERCUSSION

left leg was one huge, purple bruise, from high up on the inner side of the thigh and extending to the outer side of the ankle. I was quite crippled for some days after this, as many of my friends can testify, and I regard the whole occurrence as one of the most interesting cases of repercussion which has come under my notice, quite apart from the personal interest I naturally felt. You are quite at liberty to use this account in any way you like."

It is indeed wonderfully interesting, and a keen Theosophical worker on the "astral plane," one of that great band of "Invisible Helpers," of whom we are just beginning to learn a little, tried, in the kindness of her heart, to aid a blind friend in her sleep, or on the "astral plane," as one prefers to call it. So strong was her desire to alleviate his trouble, so deep her sympathy, that she awoke the following morning with one of her eyes badly suffused with blood, caused by the rupturing of a small blood-vessel!

The oft-repeated tale of the "Beresford Ghost" has never, so far as I am aware, been attributed to anything but the ordinary

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

ghostly visitation, common to old houses occupied by families of equally ancient lineage; but, in the light which has been thrown recently on such happenings, why should not the injury to Lady Beresford's wrist be explained by repercussion? It is a sufficiently interesting theory to pause, and give thought to.

THE BERESFORD GHOST

There is at Curraghmore, the seat of Lord Waterford, in Ireland, a manuscript account of the tale as it was originally received and implicitly believed in by the children and grandchildren of the lady to whom Lord Tyrone is supposed to have made the supernatural appearance after death. The account was written by Lady Betty Cobb, the youngest daughter of Marcus, Earl of Tyrone, and granddaughter of Nicola S. Lady Beresford. She lived to a good old age, in full use of all her faculties, both of body and mind. I can myself remember her, for when a boy I passed through Bath on a journey with my mother, and we went to her house there and had luncheon. She appeared to

REPERCUSSION

my juvenile imagination a very appropriate person to revise and transmit such a tale, and fully adapted to do ample justice to her subject-matter. It never has been doubted in the family that she received the full particulars in early life, and that she heard the circumstances, such as they were believed to have occurred, from the nearest relatives of the two persons, the supposed actors in this mysterious interview, viz. from her own father, Lord Tyrone, who died in 1763, and from her aunt, Lady Riverston, who died in 1763 also.

These two were both with their mother, Lady Beresford, on the day of her decease, and they, without assistance or witness, took off from their parent's wrist the black bandage which she had always worn on all occasions and times, even at Court, as some very old persons who lived well into the eighteenth century testified, having received their information from eye-witnesses of the fact. There was an old painting of the lady in Tyrone House, Dublin, representing her with a black ribbon bound round her wrist. This portrait disappeared in an unaccount-

able manner. It used to hang in one of the drawing-rooms in that mansion, with other family pictures. When Henry, Marquis of Waterford, sold the old town residence of the family and its grounds to the Government as the site of the Education Board, he directed Mr. Watkins, a dealer in pictures, and a man of considerable knowledge in works of art and vertu, to collect pictures, etc., which were best adapted for removal to Curraghmore. Mr. Watkins especially picked out this portrait, not only as a good work of art, but as one which, from its associations, deserved particular care and notice. When, however, the lot arrived at Curraghmore and was unpacked, no such picture was found ; and though Mr. Watkins took great pains and exerted himself to the utmost to trace what had become of it, to this day (nearly forty years) not a hint of its existence has been received or heard of.

John de la Poer, Lord Decies, was the eldest son of Richard, Earl of Tyrone, and Lady Dorothy Annesley, daughter of Arthur, Earl of Anglesey. He was born in 1665,
158

REPERCUSSION

succeeded his father in 1690, and died October 14, 1693. He became Lord Tyrone at his father's death, and is the "ghost" of this story.

Nicola Sophie Hamilton was the second and youngest daughter and co-heiress of Hugh, Lord Glenawley, who was also Baron Lunge in Sweden. Being a zealous Royalist, he had, together with his father, migrated to that country in 1643, and returned from it at the Restoration. He was of a good old family, and held considerable landed property in the county Tyrone, near Ballygawley. He died there in 1679. His eldest daughter and coheiress, Arabella Susanna, married, in 1683, Sir John Macgill, of Gill Hall, in the county Down.

Nicola S. (the second daughter) was born in 1666, and married Sir Tristram Beresford in 1687. Between that and 1693 two daughters were born, but no son to inherit the ample landed estates of his father, who most anxiously wished and hoped for an heir. It was under these circumstances, and at this period, that the manuscripts state that Lord Tyrone made his appearance after

death ; and all attribute the same cause and reason, viz. a solemn promise mutually interchanged in early life between John de la Poer, then Lord Decies, afterwards Lord Tyrone, and Nicola S. Hamilton, that whichever of the two died first, should if permitted appear to the survivor for the object of declaring the approval or rejection by the Deity of the revealed religion as generally acknowledged : of which the departed one must be fully cognisant, but of which they both had in their youth entertained unfortunate doubts.

In the month of October 1693, Sir Tristram and Lady Beresford went on a visit to her sister, Lady Macgill, at Gill Hall, now the seat of Lord Clanwilliam, whose grandmother was eventually the heiress of Sir J. Macgill's property. One morning Sir Tristram rose early, leaving Lady Beresford asleep, and went out for a walk before breakfast. When his wife joined the table very late, her appearance and the embarrassment of her manner attracted general attention, especially that of her husband. He made anxious inquiries as to her health, and

160

REPERCUSSION

asked her apart what had occurred to her wrist, which was tied up with black ribbon tightly bound round it. She earnestly entreated him not to enquire more then, or thereafter, as to the cause of her wearing or continuing afterwards to wear that ribbon, "for," she added, "you will never see me without it." He replied, "Since you urge it so vehemently, I promise you not to enquire more about it."

After completing her hurried breakfast she made anxious enquiries as to whether the post had yet arrived. It had not yet come in; and Sir Tristram asked: "Why are you so particularly eager about letters to-day?" "Because I expect to hear of Lord Tyrone's death, which took place on Tuesday." "Well," remarked Sir Tristram, "I never should have put you down for a superstitious person; but I suppose that some idle dream has disturbed you." Shortly after, the servant brought in the letters; one was sealed with black wax. "It is as I expected," she cried, "he is dead." The letter was from Lord Tyrone's steward to inform them that his master had died

in Dublin on Tuesday, October 14, at 4 P.M. Sir Tristram endeavoured to console her, and begged her to restrain her grief, when she assured him that she felt relieved and easier now that she knew the actual fact. She added, "I can now give you a most satisfactory piece of intelligence, viz. that I am with child, and that it will be a boy." A son was born the following July. Sir Tristram survived its birth little more than six years. After his death Lady Beresford continued to reside with her young family at his place in the county of Derry, and seldom went from home. She hardly mingled with any neighbours or friends, excepting with Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, of Coleraine. He was the principal personage in that town, and was, by his mother, a near relative of Sir Tristram. His wife was the daughter of Robert Gorges, LL.D. (a gentleman of good old English family, and possessed of a considerable estate in the county Meath), by Jane Loftus, daughter of Sir Adam Loftus, of Rathfarnham, and sister of Lord Lisburn. They had an only son, Richard Gorges, who was in the Army, and became a general

162

REPERCUSSION

officer very early in life. With the Jacksons Lady Beresford maintained a constant communication and lived on the most intimate terms, while she seemed determined to eschew all other society and to remain in her chosen retirement.

At the conclusion of three years thus passed, one luckless day "young Gorges" most vehemently professed his passion for her, and solicited her hand, urging his suit in a most passionate appeal, which was evidently not displeasing to the fair widow, and which, unfortunately for her, was successful. They were married in 1704. One son and two daughters were born to them, when his abandoned and dissolute conduct forced her to seek and to obtain a separation. After this had continued for four years, General Gorges pretended extreme penitence for his past misdeeds, and with the most solemn promises of amendment induced his wife to live with him again, and she became the mother of a second son. The day month after her confinement happened to be her birthday, and having recovered and feeling herself equal to some

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

exertion, she sent for her son, Sir Marcus Beresford, then twenty years old, and her married daughter, Lady Riverston. She also invited Dr. King, the Archbishop of Dublin (who was an intimate friend), and an old clergyman who had christened her, and who had always kept up a most kindly intercourse with her during her whole life, to make up a small party to celebrate the day.

In the early part of it Lady Beresford was engaged in a kindly conversation with her old friend the clergyman, and in the course of it said: "You know that I am forty-eight this day." "No indeed," he replied, "you are only forty-seven, for your mother had a dispute with me once on the very subject of your age, and I in consequence sent and consulted the registry, and can most confidently assert that you are only forty-seven this day." "You have signed my death-warrant, then," she cried. "Leave me, I pray, for I have not much longer to live, but have many things of grave importance to settle before I die. Send my son and my daughter to me immediately."

REPERCUSSION

The clergyman did as he was bidden. He directed Sir Marcus and his sister to go instantly to their mother; and he sent to the archbishop and a few other friends to put them off from joining the birthday party.

When her children repaired to Lady Beresford, she thus addressed them: "I have something of deep importance to communicate to you, my dear children, before I die. You are no strangers to the intimacy and the affection which subsisted in early life between Lord Tyrone and myself. We were educated together when young, under the same roof, in the pernicious principles of Deism. Our real friends afterwards took every opportunity to convince us of our error, but their arguments were insufficient to overpower and uproot our infidelity, though they had the effect of shaking our confidence in it, and thus leaving us wavering between the two opinions. In this perplexing state of doubt we made a solemn promise one to the other, that whichever died first should, if permitted, appear to the other for the purpose of declaring what

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

religion was the one acceptable to the Almighty. One night, years after this interchange of promises, I was sleeping with your father at Gill Hall, when I suddenly awoke and discovered Lord Tyrone sitting visibly by the side of the bed. I screamed out, and vainly endeavoured to rouse Sir Tristram. 'Tell me,' I said, 'Lord Tyrone, why and wherefore are you here at this time of night?' 'Have you then forgotten our promise to each other, pledged in early life? I died on Tuesday at four o'clock. I have been permitted thus to appear in order to assure you that the revealed religion is the true and only one by which we can be saved. I am also suffered to inform you that you are with child, and will produce a son who will marry my heiress; that Sir Tristram will not live long, when you will marry again, and you will die from the effects of childbirth in your forty-seventh year.' I begged him for some convincing sign or proof so that when the morning came I might rely upon it, and feel satisfied that his appearance had been real, and that it was not the phantom of my imagination. He caused the

REPERCUSSION

hangings of the bed to be drawn in an unusual way and impossible manner through an iron hook. I still was not satisfied, when he wrote his signature in my pocket-book. I wanted, however, more substantial proof of his visit, when he laid his hand, which was cold as marble, on my wrist; the sinews shrunk up, the nerves withered at the touch. 'Now,' he said, 'let no mortal eye, while you live, ever see that wrist,' and vanished. While I was conversing with him my thoughts were calm, but as soon as he disappeared I felt chilled with horror and dismay, a cold sweat came over me, and I again endeavoured, but vainly, to awake Sir Tristram; a flood of tears came to my relief, and I fell asleep.

"In the morning your father got up without disturbing me; he had not noticed anything extraordinary about me or the bed-hangings. When I did arise I found a long broom in the gallery outside the bedroom door, and with great difficulty I unhooked the curtain, fearing that the position of it might excite surprise and cause enquiry. I bound up my wrist with

black ribbon before I went down to breakfast, where the agitation of my mind was too visible not to attract attention. Sir Tristram made many anxious enquiries as to my health, especially as to my sprained wrist, as he conceived mine to be. I begged him to drop all questions as to the bandage, even if I continued to adopt it for any length of time. He kindly promised me not to speak of it any more, and he kept his promise faithfully. You, my son, came into the world as predicted, and your father died six years after. I then determined to abandon society and its pleasures and not mingle again with the world, hoping to avoid the dreadful predictions as to my second marriage; but alas! in the one family with whom I held constant and friendly intercourse I met the man, whom I did not regard with perfect indifference. Though I struggled by every means to conquer the passion, I at length yielded to his solicitations, and in a fatal moment for my own peace I became his wife. In a few years his conduct fully justified my demand for a separation, and

168

REPERCUSSION

I fondly hoped to escape the fatal prophecy. Under the delusion that I had passed my forty-seventh birthday, I was prevailed upon to believe in his amendment, and pardon him. I have, however, heard from undoubted authority that I am only forty-seven this day, and I know that I am about to die. I die, however, without the dread of death, fortified as I am by the sacred precepts of Christianity and upheld by its promises. When I am gone, I wish that you, my children, should unbind this black ribbon and alone behold my wrist before I am consigned to the grave.”

She then requested that she might lie down and compose herself, and her children quitted the apartment, having desired her attendant to watch her, and if any change came on to summon them to her bedside. In an hour the bell rang, and they hastened to the call, but all was over. The two children, having ordered every one to retire, knelt down by the side of the bed, when Lady Riverston unbound the black ribbon and found the wrist exactly as Lady Beres-

ford had described it—every nerve withered, every sinew shrunk.

Her friend, the Archbishop, had her buried in the Cathedral of St. Patrick, in Dublin, in the Earl of Cork's tomb, where she now lies.

CHAPTER IX

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

THERE are very few people interested in the occult and psychic side of the war who have not, in some form, heard, however disjointedly, the tale of the "Mons Miracle," so charmingly written up by Mr. Arthur Machen under the title of "The Bowmen" and reprinted here by the very kind permission of the editor of the *Evening News*.

"It was during the retreat of the eighty thousand, and the authority of the censorship is sufficient excuse for not being more explicit. But it was on the most awful day of that awful time, on the day when ruin and disaster came so near that their shades fell over the heart of London far away; and without any certain news, the hearts of men failed within them, and grew faint; as if the agony of their brothers

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

on the battlefield had entered into their souls.

“ On this dreadful day, then, when three hundred thousand men in arms with all their artillery swelled like a flood against the little English army, there was one point above all other points in our battle-line that was for a time in awful danger, not merely of defeat, but of utter annihilation. With the permission of the censorship and of the artillery experts, this corner may perhaps be described as a salient, and if this angle were crushed or broken, then the English force, as a whole, would be shattered, the Allies left would be turned, and Sedan would inevitably follow.

“ All the morning the German guns had thundered and shrieked against this corner, and against the thousand or so of men who held it. The men joked at the shells and found funny names for them, and had bets about them, and greeted them with scraps of music-hall songs. But the shells came on, and burst, and tore good Englishmen limb from limb, and tore brother from brother, and as the heat of the day increased, so did

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

the fury of that terrific cannonade. There was no help, it seemed. The English artillery was good, but there was not nearly enough of it; it was being steadily battered into scrap-iron.

“There comes a moment in a storm at sea when people say to one another, ‘It is at its worst; it can blow no harder,’ and then there is a blast ten times more fierce than any before it. So it was in these English trenches.

“There were no stouter hearts in the whole world than the hearts of those men; but even they were appalled as this seven times heated shell of the German cannonade fell upon them. And at this very moment they saw from their trenches that a tremendous host was moving against their lines. Five hundred of the thousand men remained; and as far as they could see the German infantry was pressing on against them, column upon column, a grey world of men, ten thousand of them, as it appeared afterwards.

“There was no hope at all. They shook hands, some of them. One man improvised a new version of the battle-song, ‘Good-bye,

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

good-bye to Tipperary,' ending with 'And we shan't get there.' And they all went on firing steadily. The officer pointed out that such an opportunity for high-class, fancy shooting might never occur again; the Germans dropped, line after line; the Tipperary humorist asked 'What price Sydney Street?' and the few machine-guns did their best. But everybody knew it was no use. The dead grey bodies lay in companies and battalions; but others came on and on, and they swarmed, and stirred, and advanced from beyond and beyond.

"'World without end, Amen;' said one of the British soldiers with some irrelevance, as he took aim and fired. And then he remembered—he says he cannot think why or wherefore—a queer vegetarian restaurant in London, where he had once or twice eaten eccentric dishes of cutlets made of lentils and nuts that pretended to be steak. On all the plates in this restaurant there was printed a figure of St. George in blue, with the motto *Adsit Anglis Sanctus Georgius*—May St. George be a present help to the English. This soldier happened to know Latin and

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

other useless things, and now as he fired at his man in the grey advancing mass—300 yards away—he uttered the pious vegetarian motto. He went on firing to the end, and at last Bill on his right had to clout him cheerfully over the head to make him stop, pointing out as he did so, that the King's ammunition cost money, and was not lightly to be wasted in drilling funny patterns into dead Germans.

“For, as the Latin scholar uttered his invocation he felt something between a shudder and an electric shock pass through his body. The roar of the battle died down in his ears to a gentle murmur ; instead of it, he says he heard a great voice and a shout louder than a thunder-peal, crying ‘Array, Array, Array!’

“His heart grew hot as a burning coal, it grew cold as ice within him, as it seemed to him that a tumult of voices answered to his summons. As he heard, or seemed to hear thousands shouting, ‘St. George! St. George! St. George!’

“‘Ha! messire: ha! sweet saint, grant us good deliverance!’

“‘St. George for merry England!’

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

“ ‘ Harow ! Harow ! Monseigneur St. George succour us ! ’

“ ‘ Ha ! St. George ! Ha ! St. George ; a long bow and a strong bow. ’

“ ‘ Heaven’s Knight, aid us ’ !

“ And as the soldier heard these voices, he saw before him, beyond the trench, a long line of shapes, with a shining about them. They were like men who drew the bow, and with another shout, their cloud of arrows flew singing and tingling through the air towards the German hosts.

* * * *

“ The other men in the trench were firing all the while. They had no hope ; but they aimed just as if they had been shooting at Bisley.

“ Suddenly one of them lifted up his voice in the plainest English.

“ ‘ Gawd help us ! ’ he bellowed to the man next to him. ‘ But we’re blooming marvels ! Look at those grey . . . gentlemen, look at them ! D’ye see them ? They’re not going down in dozens, nor in ’undreds ; it’s thousands, it is. Look ! Look ! there’s a regiment gone while I’m talking to ye. ’

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

“ ‘ Shut it ! ’ the other soldier bellowed, taking aim. ‘ What are ye gassing about ? ’

“ But he gulped with astonishment even as he spoke, for, indeed, the grey men were falling by the thousands. The English could hear the guttural scream of the German officers, the crackle of their revolvers as they shot the reluctant ; and still line after line crashed to the earth.

* * * *

“ All the while the Latin-bred soldier heard the cry :

“ ‘ Harow ! Harow ! Monseigneur, dear saint, quick to our aid ! St. George help us ! ’

“ The singing arrows fled so swift and thick that they darkened the air ; the heathen horde melted from before them.

* * * *

“ ‘ More machine guns ! ’ Bill yelled to Tom.

“ ‘ Don’t hear them ! ’ Tom yelled back, ‘ but thank God anyway ; they’ve got it in the neck. ’

“ In fact there were ten thousand dead German soldiers left before that salient of the English army, and consequently there was no Sedan. In Germany, a country

ruled by scientific principles, the Great General Staff decided that the contemptible English must have employed shells containing an unknown gas of a poisonous nature, as no wounds were discernible on the bodies of the dead German soldiers. But the man who knew what nuts tasted like when they called themselves steak, knew also that St. George had brought his Agincourt Bowmen to help the English."

* * * *

There is no story which has been so widely quoted and so popular, which has, in fact, one might say, really become a classic, and has set loose a tremendous number of similar tales. One constantly meets people from the "Front," from mere Tommies to those of high rank, who will solemnly testify to the truth of the appearance of this shining legion of angels who descended and "smote the Assyrians" with such dire effect. On Easter Day the Rector of St. Mary's, Brighton, preached an unusual and interesting sermon, of which this strange apparition was the theme, and which has since been printed and circulated in pamphlet form.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

“Some of you have heard a wonderful story that has come to us from the battlefield of Mons, of how in the thickest of the fight, when our troops were outnumbered by the Germans in the proportion of ten to one, suddenly there were seen legions of shining angels who came between us and the enemy and, spreading confusion in their ranks, saved our little army not only from defeat, but from annihilation. There are different versions of the story, as one might expect. No confidence could be placed in any startling narration in which several actors in the scene all agreed in every detail. When our nerves are strained almost to breaking point, we are not able to say *exactly* what it is we hear and see. One man declares he saw St. George and a host of shining bowmen whose arrows mowed down the Germans by the score, by the hundred, by the thousand. Ten thousand German corpses are said to have been found opposite one salient where five hundred British soldiers turned, just to sell their lives as dearly as they could. Later on, when they came to bury these bodies, no wound of shell

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

or bullet was found upon them, inasmuch that the Germans were amazed and declared that 'our contemptible little army' must have laid in a vast store of turpinite shells; but neither could these be found.

“Another version, possibly less dramatic, but not less miraculous, simply states that a host of angels came between our men, when they were fleeing for their lives, and the enemy, paralysing the Germans and giving the British time to reach a place of safety. Here is a letter that I was allowed to see a few days ago: ‘Last Sunday I met Miss —— and she told me she knew two officers, both of whom had themselves seen the angels who saved our left wing during the retreat from Mons—when we came right upon the Germans. Our soldiers expected annihilation, as they were almost helpless, when to their amazement the Germans stood like dazed men, never so much as touched their guns or stirred, till we had turned around and escaped by some cross-road.’

“One of Miss ——’s friends (not a religious man) told her he saw a troop of angels between us and the enemy and he has

180

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

been a changed man since. The other man she met in London last week (he is a Christian) and she asked him if he had heard the wonderful story of angels. He said he had seen them himself. While he and his comrades were retreating they heard the German cavalry tearing after them. They ran for a place where they thought a stand might be made with some hope of safety, but before they could reach it the German cavalry were upon them, so they turned and faced the enemy, expecting instant death, when to their wonder they saw between them and the enemy a whole troop of angels, and the horses of the Germans turned round and stampeded, the men tugging at their bridles. He solemnly declared he saw the angels, whom the horses saw plainly enough, and it gave them time to reach the little fort, or whatever it was, in safety."

All these details and many more were corroborated, even if one's friends did not care to have their names used, and now, like a bolt from the blue, like a chilling wave of scepticism on the warm, sandy shores of

belief, comes the statement from Mr. Machen, in an interview with Dr. Horton, that the whole story was merely written as copy !

DR. HORTON AND "THE BOWMEN."

MY MONS LEGEND APPEARS YET
AGAIN

BY ARTHUR MACHEN

(By kind permission of the Editor of the
Evening News.)

"The story of 'The Bowmen' has been told, I believe, in two senses in the *Evening News*. I was, as a matter of fact and lucky chance, the first in the field.

"Some time last September I was thinking of the terrible and heroic retreat from Mons. It is many years since I have told a tale, but somehow there was a fire in that history that burned in me, and made me wish that I could celebrate it in some poor fashion. And so the tale of 'The Bowmen' came into my head.

"Very, very briefly ; it is a story of the British troops at the point of agony and despair, hopelessly outnumbered in men and guns. One of our soldiers invokes the help

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

of the champion of England, St. George. St. George brings up the spirits of the Agincourt Bowmen in array, and the German host is annihilated by their ghostly arrows. That is all. It was quite a simple, ordinary little legend of the battlefield, and I wrote it and dismissed it and wished I could have made it better.

“As for its origin : of course the idea of a ghostly army helping a bodily army is as old as story-telling. Heroes, gods, saints and angels have always borne their part in the battles of the ages. But to be particular : I think that the tale which I had especially in mind was Mr. Rudyard Kipling’s legend of ‘The Lost Legion.’ The similarity between Mr. Kipling’s big story and my little story is of the slightest ; still, that was the especial spur to my pen. I must say once for all, that I had heard no kind or sort of rumour of any spiritual intervention during the retreat from Mons, nor any faintest echo of such rumour. ‘The Bowmen,’ as printed in the *Evening News*, was invention, as much as any story can be invention.

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

“ This was the first telling of the tale. The second telling was done by the editorial department of this paper. It told the odd sequel to my harmless little story. Everybody would have it that the tale was true. The clergy said so. The Army said so. The occultists said so. All sorts of vague authorities — ‘ an officer,’ a ‘ soldier,’ a ‘ correspondent ’—were quoted to show that the incident of spiritual intervention, or something very like it, had actually happened. The names of these witnesses were not given. The editor of the *Evening News* asked me what I meant by it. I told him that to the best of my belief, judging by certain similarities in incident and phrase, all these rumours were derived from my story of ‘ The Bowmen.’ A lady then wrote indignantly to ask me whether I claimed the authorship of the second Book of Kings. In the words of Mr. Harold Skimpole, she was influenced in this by passion, not by reason.

“ All this is an affair of some weeks ago ; and I thought that the matter had blown over. But last Sunday that distinguished

184

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

Nonconformist pastor, Dr. R. F. Horton, preaching at Manchester, said :

“ ‘ There is a story repeated by so many witnesses that if anything can be established by contemporary evidence it is established—of the retreat from Mons. A section of the line was in imminent peril and it seemed as if it must inevitably be borne down and cut off.

“ ‘ Our men saw a company of angels interposed between them and the German cavalry and the horses of the Germans stampeded. Evidently the animals beheld what our men beheld. The German soldiers endeavoured to bring the horses back to the line, but they fled. It was the salvation of our men.’

“ So I went to see Dr. Horton and told him the story, and the story of the story, and he was inclined to think that there might be something in my theory of derivation. His information was not at first, or, I think, even at second hand, and so he is content to suspend his judgment pending further evidence.

“ But passing from the unimportant par-

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

ticular to the important general, I was extremely interested to find that Dr. Horton held that such a case of spiritual intervention was eminently creditable.

“ ‘Such phenomena,’ he said—‘and we may call them phenomena—are a constant fact in history; we have many instances of supernatural beings appearing and exerting an influence on human life.

“ ‘And I was more particularly disposed to believe in the story of the angelic apparition during the retreat from Mons, from what I heard myself from an army reader. He told me that all the men who were in that retreat were changed men. They had all prayed, and they had all felt a sense as of spiritual uplifting; and so the tale seemed to me congruous with their experiences.’

“ ‘But if we are to believe in apparitions of angels, do we not make many of the legends of the Middle Ages credible?’

“ ‘Yes, I think we do, and rightly.’

“ ‘Wouldn’t you say that, generally speaking, the Protestant attitude towards miracles has been this: that all the miracles reported in the Bible are true, while all

FAIRY TALES FROM THE FRONT

miracles not reported in the Bible are false ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, I think that has been the Protestant view. It is quite a mistaken one, it appears to me, based on a false view of the Bible and a false view of the spiritual life.

“ ‘ The older view of miracles has changed ; the works of James and Myers have shown that these phenomena are constant, that the early history of Christianity is full of such occurrences.’

“ I put in here one aspect of the volte-face of physical science as to the miraculous.

“ ‘ I can remember,’ I said, ‘ when all the ‘ scientific ’ people laughed at the story of St. Francis of Assisi and the Stigmata. They were quite certain that that was a lie, and an absurd lie. Now, I believe, they say that stigmata are matters of ordinary clinical observation, that a girl, for example, by taking thought can make the name of her sweetheart appear on her flesh.’

“ Dr. Horton agreed with me that such a ‘ miracle,’ supposing it to occur, would have no spiritual significance. But it has often struck me that the most awful disaster

that could happen to the world would be the scientific 'proof' of the Christian religion. There is a great depth of wisdom in Tertullian's *Credo quia impossibile*. A religion must be 'impossible' to the ordinary, practical understanding—or it would not be a religion at all.

“And this was really implied in Dr. Horton's remark that all miraculous interventions must be rare and exceptional.

“‘Otherwise,’ he said, ‘they would lose their force; they must be extraordinary to be effectual. If angels appeared to us every day we should lose the sense of the spiritual world.’

“So the tale of ‘The Bowmen’ has at least done this: it has incidentally elicited from a distinguished and representative Nonconformist a most interesting restatement of the Protestant theory of the miraculous.”

CHAPTER X

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

THE GALLOPING HORSE OF THE L——S

(With many thanks to A.M.C.)

“WHEN quite a young girl I was visiting some friends of my mother, and was walking one morning with the vicar and his wife in the avenue of the adjoining park—which was one of the show places of the neighbourhood, having long lines of stately elms on each side of a very broad drive. All of a sudden I heard the mad galloping of horse’s hoofs, so near that, without turning to see, I pushed Mrs. —— roughly back, to save her from the onrush of the uncontrollable animal. She looked at me in blank astonishment.

“‘My *dear* Janet!’ she ejaculated, ‘what playfulness! you nearly knocked me down!’”

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

“ ‘ But didn’t you *hear* ? ’ I asked her in astonishment.

“ ‘ Hear *what* ? ’ she said.

“ ‘ Why—the runaway horse : I can hear him still.’

“ She glanced at her husband, then at me, with the same queer look, a knowing look. ‘ Isn’t it funny ? ’ she said to him in a half-audible aside.

“ ‘ Isn’t what funny ? ’ I demanded, irritated, I knew not why.

“ They looked at each other again, she interrogatively, and he nodded.

“ ‘ I suppose I may as well tell you,’ she began, in a resigned tone, ‘ for I know your tenacity when you want to know things. You heard that horse because you are one of the L——s. No one but members of the family ever hear it.’

“ ‘ But what is the story ? ’ I asked, ever eager for information.

“ ‘ You know, don’t you, that this is the old family property of the L——s, your father’s people ? Your—I forget which great-grandfather, lost it to the family through gambling. When he was quite a young man

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

he married a beautiful Irish girl, who was passionately fond of riding, so the story goes, and frightened the grooms out of their wits when they had to follow her.

“ ‘ But one day, poor thing, she met her master in a horse that her husband had expressly forbidden her to ride. He was away for the day, and she had the beast saddled and mounted him, the first time he had ever been ridden by a woman, and the last. . . . Maddened by the flapping of her skirt, he became unmanageable, bolted, galloped down the avenue, and she was thrown and killed at the foot of the tree where we were standing when you nearly pushed me down. No one has ever *seen* her, and the phantom horse is only heard by members of the family. It is very interesting to my husband and me, for you knew nothing of the story at all. I don't think you even knew the place once belonged to your people, did you ? ’

“ ‘ No—I knew nothing,’ I assured her, for, as a rule, girls of seventeen have not much taste or inclination to study the musty parchments of family history, and I was no exception to the general rule.

“However, this is absolutely true, and was, I think, the first time I ever saw, or heard, anything from the other world.”

THE GHOST OF THE FRENCH BONNE

This story was told to a friend of mine by the lady who afterwards became her mother-in-law, though the occurrence happened when she was a young girl living at home.

“Her father was a well-known doctor practising in the town of M—— in Wales, and his son shared the practice with him. They occupied a large, rambling, old-fashioned house, and, connected with it by passages equally long and rambling, quite shut off from the house, was the surgery. It was understood by the servants and others, that on no account were they to go to the surgery, and it was, in fact, as much cut off from the house as if on the other side of the town, so you understand that no matter who came and went, there was nothing known of it in the house.

“You may imagine then, how surprised my mother-in-law was one day, to see, come

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

out of this passage, and go swiftly up the stairs leading into the family part of the house, a typical French *bonne*. She could not understand it, and stared at her in wide-eyed surprise, thinking she must be dreaming. But no, there was the trim little figure, walking with a certain swagger that is inseparable from that class of Frenchwoman. Her skirt hung evenly above a neat pair of feet with high-heeled shoes, which tapped on the worn oak floor, and her cap was set at a coquettish angle with ribbons that fluttered as she walked. There was no mistake, and wondering greatly, my mother-in-law saw her disappear upstairs. She was alone that afternoon, and being at this moment called to supervise some domestic detail, could not follow her half-formed intention of going upstairs to see what had become of the *bonne*.

“Some hours later, at dinner or tea, I forget which, she asked her mother suddenly :

“ ‘ Oh, mother, who was in the house this afternoon with a French *bonne* ? ’

“ Her mother, amazed, asked her what she meant, and the question was repeated.

“ ‘ A French *bonne* ? My dear, there isn’t

came so deeply interested that he asked my mother-in-law to write it down for him to send to the Society for Psychical Research in whose annals I believe it is now cosily tucked away."

No book of this sort is complete without at least one casual reference to that synonym of Irish gentility—the banshee. Fate having led my steps far from the Emerald Isle I have never encountered one of these vapoury ladies, though my father distinctly remembered hearing the banshee wail on the night of his mother's death. His childhood's home, built on the ruins of Abbey Kartram, Co. Roscommon, was, by the very nature of its environment, an ideal happy hunting-ground for spooks of all sorts; the Hawthorne Walk—the banshee's favourite promenade—being by common consent ostentatiously avoided after nightfall.

As in most parts of Ireland tales of the supernatural abounded, and he swore to the truth of this experience. Returning one afternoon from a shooting expedition with his dog, the only way home led through a small wood with the reputation of being

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

haunted. It was growing dark, and closing the gate and going into the mysterious dreary gloom, *he heard the gate slowly open and shut after him.* Man's best friend, with a piercing howl, took to his heels! It was a trying and fearsome situation for a small boy, and my father hurried on, certain that *something* was behind him, but dared not look over his shoulder, for this is fraught with great danger when you are followed by ghosts. He used to laugh and say, it needed all the pride he could summon to prevent his imitating the example of the dog and making a bolt for the open.

After what seemed hours, he got out of the wood, slamming the gate defiantly: to hear it *listlessly re-open and shut. . . .* His blood seemed to curdle, for he remembered that if you see a light while being followed by a ghost you faint, and no one has ever yet been able to tell the direful consequences: and he was rapidly nearing a farmhouse from which a cheerful gleam always shone out into the night! With thumbs tightly pressed against his eyelids he stumbled along until well past the

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

comments. After it had been fully discussed from every point of view from fire, earth, or water, the brother whose question led to the story being revived, said quietly :

“ ‘ Perhaps as it’s all past and gone, and you are grown up now, you would like to hear the real truth of your ghost.’

“ ‘ Do you mean to say you *really* know what it was ? ’ demanded his sister.

“ ‘ Yes, I knew it all the time. Keep quiet for a minute and I’ll satisfy your curiosity, for it is very queer, and I don’t suppose it will ever be explained.’ He paused to light a cigarette with exasperating slowness, for they were talking over the walnuts and wine. ‘ That afternoon—the one when you say you saw the *bonne*, father had just received a box containing a skeleton, from Paris——’

“ ‘ A skeleton ? ’ interrupted one of the family, “ whatever did father want with a skeleton ? ’

“ ‘ They are sometimes used by the medical profession,’ replied the story-teller imperturbably. ‘ Shall I go on, or do you prefer your own conversation ? ’

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

“ ‘ Shut up, Susie,’ said the sister who had seen the *bonne*. ‘ *Please* go on, Tom, I’m *dying* to hear what it was.’

“ ‘ The skeleton was that of a young French girl, who had been guillotined for the murder of her lover. She was a *bonne* in a family, and stabbed him one day in a fit of jealous anger. The box arrived almost at the exact minute when you saw your apparition.’

“ There was utter, dead silence around the table. . . . Every one was thinking busily, then my mother-in-law, who was, naturally, much excited at having her story corroborated after all these years of silence, exclaimed :

“ ‘ I never heard anything like it ! *Now* I understand why father gave Tom such a queer look when I was telling mother about it ! I wondered what he did it for ! And to think that *I* should have seen her ! I am glad to know I wasn’t mistaken after believing it all these years.’

“ The extraordinary story naturally formed the sole topic of conversation when the ladies had left the table, and the Bishop of —— be-

such a thing in M——,’ replied her mother. ‘Where did you see her? What on earth are you talking of?’

“ ‘I saw her, mother, as clearly as I see you. She was coming from the passage that leads to the surgery. She closed the door after her very carefully, and went upstairs.’ ”

“ ‘You are dreaming, dear,’ said her mother indulgently. ‘You know no one ever comes out of the surgery that way, least of all a *bonne*. And it could not have been one of the maids for they are forbidden to go there on any excuse.’

“ ‘But I’m *not* mistaken, mother. I saw her as plainly as I see you,’ replied the girl positively, ‘I saw every detail of her costume, and heard the high heels she wore tap on the floor. It was a funny, hollow tap, and I remember thinking that only a French girl in her position would wear such heels, they would seem out of place on one of the maids here.’

“ And so the conversation lasted for some time without any definite result being reached. Mother and daughter were equally positive,

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

and father and son, reading their papers, said nothing, and the incident passed off. In fact, it was not alluded to again, though my mother-in-law never forgot what she had seen, and wondered often what it meant. . . .

“ Many years after, when, in fact, she had been married and settled for a good number of years, she was dining with her family on some gala occasion, I’m not sure it wasn’t Christmas, anyway all the family had come from all corners of the country, and the conversation turned on ghosts and the supernatural.

“ ‘ What about that ghost of yours ? ’ asked her brother, leaning forward, as they were seated on the same side of the table.

“ ‘ What do you mean ? ’ she replied.

“ ‘ The ghost that you saw when you were quite a kid, the French *bonne*. ’

“ ‘ O-h ! I remember, but I don’t think it was a ghost. I haven’t thought of it for years. ’

“ There was a clamour from those members of the family who had never heard the tale, which was promptly retold, and when finished, provoked the inevitable train of

Rubicon and soon reached home. The dog had hidden under a bed and refused to be coaxed out for the next twenty-four hours.

This story I distinctly recollect as being the first time I had ever heard of a ghost, and the subject had the added fascination that father and I were obliged to hold our spooky conversations strictly *sub rosa*, such topics being frowned upon by my mother, who had so great and unreasoning a horror of ghosts, that she instantly left the room if the word was spoken. Needless to say, this was an infallible way to stimulate one's interest in the unknown, and certainly fostered that Pandora-like curiosity from which we all suffer at times.

There are numerous ghost stories in the family, mostly leaning towards the nebulous, and one corroborated encounter of my grandfather and a ghost. On this occasion, except that a lovely lady pulled aside the curtains of his bed and gazed at him with soulful eyes, I am really at a loss for detail. It happened during the latter part of the eighteenth century, in the glorious days when people retired to rest *sans reproche*

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

for a feeling of bland jollity engendered by those generous wines that never paid the king a shilling !

When related at the breakfast table next morning, the lady described proved to be a sister of the host, of whose death my grandfather was not even aware, never having met her.

We are supposed to be the—can one say owners?—of two ghosts in the house. One, an old woman who sits huddled up in a chair, with a small dun-coloured shawl across her shoulders ; the other, a child who runs down the passage and disappears into the room haunted by the nurse. This innocuous old person has been seen by friends, the child by former owners. Though I have never *seen* anything, it has been my lot to hear very queer noises in the dead of night, to be aroused by taps at my door and deferential, mysterious coughs, not to speak of suffering from Dead Men's Pinches !

These ghostly visitations never need cause annoyance, for, merely say : “ Good people, whoever ye are, I do not grudge you shelter, but, for pity's sake, disturb me not,” and

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

Night in the country holds us enchanted by a sense of awesome mystery, the sound of each fluttering leaf, the never-silent plash of falling waters, the thousand intangibilities of animal life that rustle stealthily add to the overwhelming eeriness. . . . The damp of the night bears the smell of millions of years of dead things that crushes us with the futility of it all.

But after midnight there is a change. The gaunt poplars cease to imprison the pliant forms of nymphs, who are freed by the moonbeams. The enchanted toad appears in her true guise as a fairy princess; the fairies hold their revels. . . . What wonder the night is full of mysterious whispers and rustlings, that the bracken is stirred by the scurryings of frightened bunnies whom the goblins punish by pulling their long ears for intruding on the revels of the "good people" . . . and all this adds to the glamour of the night.

Alas! so many new and beautiful phenomena have steadily developed themselves that one feels quite diffident in trifling with anything so old fashioned as a mere ghost, beloved of Dickens and the nearly extinct

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

Christmas annual—still they have their use, and will continue unabashed while we continue. I wonder if anyone nowadays believes in the Suffolk superstition, that *the bone of a mare's leg* hidden somewhere in the house lays a ghost? Not many years ago one was actually seen by a friend of mine, when an old house was being repaired after a disastrous fire, though no one could say if it possessed the virtues claimed for it, or where it came from.

Well, dear old-fashioned ghosts, Banshees, Invisible Helpers, all of you who are the spirits of those who have lived and loved as we are doing in your places, why should your appearance throw us into a panic of terror and “angels and ministers of grace” attitude? Soon, ah, too soon, there will come a day when we shall ask your welcome to your land of shadows, when we shall come to you across the Styx, for life's only

*Un jour de fête,
Un jour de deuil,
La vie est faite,
En un clin d'œil.*

and then—and then . . .

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

find that the birth of twin children put him for ever beyond the chance of inheriting the estates to which he stood in the direct line. Crazed with anger, he threatened the trembling nurse with his pistol, snatched the newly-born infants from their mother's arms and, cutting with his sword a piece from the tapestry hangings of the bed in which to wrap the babes, carried them to the blazing fire in the hall, thrusting their quivering bodies down into the glowing embers until they were consumed!

Even in those days there was gossip, and the annoyance of the mother, and the horrible story told by the nurse raised a scandal that could not be hushed, and much against the inclination of his friends and contemporaries, "Wild Darrell" was tried by twelve good men and true for the heinous crime of murder. Perhaps our forefathers were less squeamish, for the gentleman with the conflagatory tastes was acquitted on the grounds "that his brain was temporarily deranged by the disappointment he had suffered."

It is also said that the presiding judge

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

soon afterwards received substantial recognition, being made Lord Chief Justice or something equally worth while, but, of course, this may be one of those little bits of contemporary spite and scandal which animate history. I believe the strongest piece of evidence for the prosecution was the ragged hole left in the tapestry of the bed hangings. Am I right in saying that these hangings are still shown ?

The world is full of ghosts if we can only understand and see them. Even at the front, where horrible carnage sweeps aside any thought but of the minute, and life's hardest side leaves no time for speculation as to the unseen, a letter written in the thick of it throbs with the weirdness of the actual.

“It was the most cruel march where men's bones creak and a thousand men sweat and mumble.

“In the darkness great forms of giants seem to follow beside us and little figures glide around our knees. *I know now where those stories of angels and giants start. Perhaps they are true.*”

PEEPS INTO THE PSYCHIC WORLD

you will never be troubled more. Only you must be polite. That is imperative.

And there are the out-of-door ghosts, one a sort of "Elaine," who wafts herself across the lake at midnight, and a ghostly horse of whose pedigree we have no record. When the following incident happened, we knew nothing about the horse, so it is all the more remarkable on that account.

One very cold winter's night, about half past nine, we heard a horse and carriage come up the drive, heard distinctly the wheels and hoofs striking the ground. It stopped, and we waited for the ring at the bell, wondering who it could be at that time of night in the country. *There was no ring. . . .* Finally, instigated by curiosity, someone opened the door—to find nothing!

Our house spooks are quite busy at times, and there has been the usual run of bells ringing in unexplained fashion, and one ingenuous girl confessed when returning late at night from her bath, she became so obsessed with the feeling that *something* was about to grab her by the ankles, that, abandoning even a pretence to dignity, she

SOME OLD-FASHIONED GHOST STORIES

fled! scattering a trail of sponges and soap through the house which occasioned much surprise to the early bird next morning.

The place is, of course, very old, and in certain parts of the grounds, near a ruined mill, no cat or dog will remain at night, no matter how tempting the blandishment offered. The assertion that animals possess the power of "seeing things" which are beyond our ken is frequently made, but how can anyone tell? and children often puzzle their nurses by babbling of little grey ladies standing at the foot of their beds, and hold long conversations with other children invisible to all save themselves. Perhaps the saddest of all stories of child-ghosts is that of "Wild Darrell," which, though well known, must bear one more repetition.

In a certain house in Hampshire, the inmates are often startled by the apparition of two tiny children, who smile with a pathetic sweetness, and *vanish into the great fireplace in the hall!* It seems that long ago, in the days of Queen Anne, the heir of the manor returned from the grand tour, to

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