

ALTA L. PIPER

The Life and Work  
OF  
Mrs Piper

*With an Introduction by*

SIR OLIVER LODGE

*F.R.S., D.Sc.*

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., LTD.,  
BROADWAY HOUSE : 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY W. JOLLY AND SONS, LTD., ABERDEEN.



Mrs. PIPER

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

My thanks are due in no small measure to the Council of the Society for Psychical Research for permission to use and quote from the material contained in the Society's Proceedings. I wish also to express my grateful acknowledgments to all those who have graciously permitted me to make such use of their correspondence as I desired. And to Miss H. A. Dallas for permission to quote from her book *Mors Janua Vitae* I also extend my thanks.

ALTA L. PIPER.

HARROW-ON-THE-HILL,  
ENGLAND,  
1929.

## CONTENTS

---

		PAGE
	FOREWORD BY SIR OLIVER LODGE, - - -	IX
CHAPTER		
I.	MEDIUMSHIP: SOME GENERAL CONDITIONS,	1
II.	CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, - - -	10
III.	MARRIAGE: AND THE FIRST MESSAGE, -	16
IV.	THE TESTIMONY OF PROFESSOR JAMES, -	21
V.	PROF. JAMES AND DR. HODGSON, - - -	29
VI.	DR. HODGSON BEGINS HIS INVESTIGATION,	34
VII.	DR. HODGSON'S PROPOSAL, - - -	42
VIII.	ENGLAND, NOVEMBER, 1889, - - -	47
IX.	MR. MYERS AND SIR OLIVER LODGE, - -	54
X.	TRANCE CONDITIONS, - - -	62
XI.	HOME LIFE, - - -	69
XII.	"G. P." - - -	76
XIII.	"IMPERATOR GROUP", - - -	83
XIV.	PHENOMENA, - - -	93
XV.	APHORISMS FROM THE OTHER SIDE, -	109
XVI.	THE DEATH OF DR. HODGSON (1905), -	115
XVII.	RICHARD HODGSON—THE MAN, -	121
XVIII.	ENGLAND AGAIN, - - -	128
XIX.	THE LATIN MESSAGE, - - -	135
XX.	THE LATIN MESSAGE Cont. (I.), - -	139
XXI.	„ „ „ „ (II.) - -	150
XXII.	MARIEMONT AND SIR OLIVER LODGE, -	161
XXIII.	TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF POWER, -	169
XXIV.	RESUMPTION OF POWER, - - -	176
XXV.	THE FAUNUS MESSAGE, - - -	180
XXVI.	SOME SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES, - -	185
XXVII.	RECENT PHENOMENA, - - -	189
XXVIII.	MRS. PIPER, THE WOMAN, AND HER WORK,	198

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MRS. PIPER - - - - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
MRS. PIPER—AS A CHILD - - -	<i>- facing page</i>	12
WILLIAM JAMES - - - - -	,,	22
F. W. H. MYERS - - - - -	,,	58
MRS. PIPER SOON AFTER HER MARRIAGE -	,,	72
RICHARD HODGSON, LL.D. - - - - -	,,	122
SIR OLIVER LODGE - - - - -	,,	164
SPECIMENS OF AUTOMATIC WRITING - -	<i>pp.</i>	<i>85 and 89</i>

## FOREWORD BY SIR OLIVER LODGE

---

THERE is a popular idea that persons possessed of pronounced psychic faculty must be of unbalanced character and unfitted for normal life. To some extent the same feeling exists about people endowed with Mathematical or Artistic or Musical faculty, though not to the same extent. It is well therefore to have this impression mitigated, if not removed, by a fuller acquaintance with the facts. There are no doubt many varieties of exceptional endowment, and there is naturally some curiosity to know how the faculty was discovered in any particular person, and what it feels like to be so endowed.

About Mrs. Piper's gifts there is no sort of doubt. She was brought to our notice in England some forty years ago by Professor William James, who, being pestered by the ladies of his family with strange accounts of supernormal knowledge possessed by a Mrs. Piper in Boston, decided to go, as an *esprit fort*, and explode the superstition. With the result that he was himself entangled, and perceived that he had unexpectedly encountered something unrecognised by orthodox psychology, something which badly needed exploration and elucidation. For many years there-

after Mrs. Piper was under the scrutiny, and submitted to the critical methods, of the Society for Psychological Research ; with the results which all the world knows or may know, both from books and from the *Proceedings* of that Society.

Of exemplary family life, Mrs. Piper continues to this day leading a normal existence with her two devoted daughters. Her psychic faculties which during a time of strain were for some years diminished to the more ordinary level of automatic writing, have since returned. We cannot legislate for these things ; our business is to learn from the facts.

Her life work has been devoted to providing material for a nascent science, including a kind or variety of interaction between mind and matter, which, though puzzling and unusual, has already had instructive and beneficent and comforting results. In most walks of life people who have thus sacrificed themselves and leisure for the good of the community are appreciated and honoured, and Mrs. Piper has herself made many devoted friends ; but so long as the power exhibited in a state of trance is regarded as abnormal or uncanny, so long will the services of genuine mediums fail to meet with their due share of gratitude and recognition.

It is in the hope that gradually a saner and more friendly attitude will be taken by the community at large to those who serve it that I welcome this account of Mrs. Piper's life and work by one who, since infancy, has lived with

her, and who, though not endowed with her mother's power, has knowledge about it and sympathy with it, having often acted as amanuensis for communicators from the other side. It is no light task and no small service which the few exceptionally endowed mediums have performed and are performing. They have thereby been privileged to bring comfort and restore faith to the bereaved, to reunite otherwise broken family ties, to demonstrate the truth of survival in the most practical and definite way, and generally to assist scientific investigators in their endeavour to understand better the nature and properties of the human soul, apart from its customary bodily manifestations.

The atmosphere of doubt and hesitation which still clings round the subject in scientific circles is unworthy of what might be our present enlightenment, and is too reminiscent of the struggle for truth which our ancestors underwent in the past when they testified to novel experiences. A better day is dawning, though progress is slow. The facts are too strong much longer to be resisted; and this conscientious and careful volume may be of some assistance as well as of considerable interest inasmuch as it publishes, and republishes, some of the facts, and at the same time displays to the world the private history of one of the most famous mediums of our own day.

OLIVER LODGE.

# THE LIFE AND WORK OF MRS. PIPER

## CHAPTER I

### MEDIUMSHIP : SOME GENERAL CONDITIONS

**D**URING that terrible cataclysm, the Great War, already mercifully fading into the background of men's minds, millions of lives "went out" like candles in the wind. Quicker than thought, that intangible, invisible, dimly sensed "something" which makes of this mass of flesh and blood and bone, a living, breathing, animate thing, became, to all intents and purposes, extinct. Where had it gone, men found themselves wondering. What had become of it, that which they called the "soul"?

Those fortunate ones whose heritage of faith in a hereafter was stronger than their sorrow, found comfort in that faith. But others, and a vast majority they formed, having long since broken away from the orthodoxy of their fathers, now found themselves suddenly brought to grips with an overwhelming, overpowering grief, and in their extremity turned restlessly to the various "isms" of the day, searching—searching for a ray of comfort in their darkness; many of these, in their

great need, finding themselves driven, as it were, to investigate that hitherto more or less rigidly tabooed realm of psychical research. It was this hope, born of despair, that here at last might be found that proof of immortality so desperately desired, that created the unprecedented interest manifested in spiritualism and psychical research during the closing years of the Great War, and which still in great measure continues unabated. Indeed, the well-read man or woman of to-day who is not interested in some phase of psychical research is the exception; though, as is but natural, this interest manifests itself in different ways and to different degrees according to the temperament and training of the individual. On one point, however, all thinking men and women are agreed, and that is that without personal experience, no matter how extensive one's course of reading or study may be, it is impossible to touch more than the very outermost fringe of this comprehensive subject.

Now, it is just in this matter of acquiring the essential personal experience wherein, to the novice at least, lies a potential danger. For, in order to attain this experience, it is perforce necessary to obtain the services of a medium, if one does not possess mediumistic power oneself, and if we are deadly honest we have to admit that by no means all who claim to possess this power are justified in their pretensions: sometimes it is a case, unfortunately, of deliberate dishonesty on the part of the medium, but more often than not one of

genuine self-deception. Especially are instances in the last mentioned category to be found in that phase of mediumship known as automatic writing which is now becoming so comparatively common. That this should be so, however, is but passing strange when we remember that these "automatic" scripts more often than not are genuinely produced without any conscious knowledge or volition on the part of the automatist; a fact which must obviously tend to strengthen the readiness, sometimes eagerness, which the producer of these scripts not infrequently manifests in attributing their origin to "spirits." Now it is against a too readily accepted assumption of this nature that both the automatist and the investigator must constantly and assiduously be on guard as, very often, upon careful and unbiassed analysis, these writings are found to display naught, really, but the reflection of the philosophical, religious, or materialistic musings, or convictions, of the automatist himself.

It is perfectly true that one of the most moot questions of the day in the study of mental phenomena is to what extent the personality, education, training, and environment of a medium influence the phenomena produced. But in the type of automatic writing referred to above, this problem, as such, obviously does not exist.

The problem to what extent the medium's own mental equipment influences the phenomena is an intriguing as well as an important one, and to my way of thinking is closely analagous to the simile of the window glass. It is of course recognised

#### 4 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

that light passing through a clean window-pane is stronger and clearer than that which filters through a dirty pane, although through the partially obstructed, or cloudy glass, a certain amount of light does pass. In other words, to a certain extent, the medium affects that which it conveys. And this is true, not only of the window-pane but of other physical mediums of conduction as well. Wherefore, then, may it not conceivably be equally true of psychical mediums?

In this connection we are all doubtless familiar with the question, so commonly asked, if spirit communication *is* possible, why has not something really worth while, something for instance in the nature of an invention, been given in this way to an interested and waiting world. Now, considering the equipment and temperament of the mediums who thus far have produced veridical intellectual phenomena, this question whenever I hear it asked, immediately conjures up the picture in my mind of, let us say, a Savant who finds himself confronted with the necessity of telegraphing a speech in Russian and can procure for the purpose only an English speaking telegraphist to whom he is obliged to telephone his text. With this difference, however, that in our hypothetical illustration the difficulties are well known and appreciated, whereas, in the other instance, they can only be surmised and that imperfectly.

But let us return, for a moment, to the consideration of the question of self-deception, or delusion, on the part of the medium. This is

indeed, a serious condition and requires careful, patient, and considerate handling when it can in time be helped ; but an even more serious condition with which we sometimes find ourselves faced is that of deliberate and intentional dishonesty. This is a factor which must be borne in mind at the beginning and, indeed, throughout the course of any scientifically conducted investigation. Although most regrettable it is, nevertheless, understandable that mediums accepting payment for their services—and the labourer is worthy of his hire—may conceivably be over-anxious to return value, as they understand it, for their fee, and consequently, if genuine phenomena are not at the time forthcoming, they may be tempted on such occasions to resort to fraud rather than, as it probably appears to them, disappoint their clients. And this condition of affairs is no doubt further complicated and aggravated by the fact that genuine metapsychical phenomena *cannot* be produced at all times or under all conditions. As Sir Oliver Lodge says, “We cannot legislate for these things, our business is to understand them.”

The factors which contribute to this disability are probably not all known but from among those that are, we need consider here only the two most important ones, viz., ill-health, or over-fatigue from any cause, on the part of the psychic. Both these factors are likely, though not bound, to act as powerful deterrents to the successful production of psychical phenomena either physical or mental;

## 6 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

and the importance of recognising and protecting the psychic as far as possible from both conditions cannot be too strongly stressed. For, when the deterrent effect of these two contributing causes is really understood, and the negative conditions remedied intelligently, the resultant improvement in the psychic's work will richly repay any investigator.

On the other hand, it must not be lost sight of, that wise and unceasing caution on the part of the investigator as well as a bias towards being over-critical, rather than too credulous, of all phenomena obtained, are essential qualifications of a really sound experimenter. And it is hardly necessary, perhaps, to add that the very first requirement at the beginning of an investigation is to establish beyond reasonable doubt the personal integrity of the medium with whom one is working.

A propos of this last remark, I want particularly to stress the wisdom and necessity, both for his own sake and the sake of psychical research, of every potential medium's submitting freely and gracefully to intelligent scientific investigation at the outset of his career, if I may use this term in this connection. Also, it would be well for every experimenter to remember that the part of a psychical investigator is no sinecure, for he must be ever vigilant, alert, and at all times prepared to meet and cope with new and puzzling problems, situations, and conditions. Nor must he allow himself ever to forget that only by

patiently persevering, sometimes in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties, can he hope eventually to determine even the genuineness, let alone the true nature, of the phenomena that he observes.

Up to this point we have considered but one angle of the psychical investigator's task, and that, perhaps, the obvious one. There is yet another angle, however, which is every bit as important and which requires just as much, if not more, care and intelligent handling on the part of the investigator than that which we have already considered. This is the sympathetic understanding and consideration due to the medium with whom the experimenter is privileged to work. For that this *is* a privilege, as well as that the medium, who is willing to submit to scientific investigation, should be accorded the fullest measure of sympathetic consideration compatible with the requirements of truth, justice, and accuracy—in other words, with the dictates of science—is happily coming to be realised and conceded more and more with each succeeding year.

Nor for one moment must we allow ourselves to forget that genuine mediumship is a delicate and as yet by no means wholly understood phenomenon. Equally must we remember that if this phenomenon is to endure, it is essential that it should be handled with the greatest care and circumspection; and *never* either by the possessor, or by the investigator, abused.

## 8 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

So much, experience has thus far taught us. And if we consider for a moment, we realise that this is not an imposition peculiar to the psychic medium, but that it is equally applicable to all known mediums of communication. The seismograph, the radio, the familiar telegraph, to cite but a few of the best known, are all sensitively and delicately constructed mediums of communication, and require careful manipulation if their usefulness is not to be impaired. Even that common, and often much abused instrument of our modern communication, the telephone, cannot be banged about regardless of the consequences if the best results are to be obtained.

And so it is with psychic mediums. If investigators desire the best results it is every bit as essential that they should exercise the utmost consideration for their instrument as that they should constantly be on their guard against the possibility of fraud, conscious or otherwise. Both these requirements are indispensable to the successful investigation.

A psychic investigator who combined in an extraordinary degree both the intelligent understanding of his instrument with the necessary caution in the handling of his investigation, was Richard Hodgson, LL.D., and Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, England, who for sixteen years as Secretary and Treasurer of the American Branch of the English Society for Psychical Research, investigated the phenomena of Mrs. Piper. Moreover, the annals of Psychical

Research, contain no record of any other psychic who has so willingly, so rigorously, or for so long a time been investigated by science as has Mrs. Piper. Wherefore, this little volume on the life of this renowned psychic together with an account of the investigation of her phenomena by Dr. Hodgson, F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor William James, and other men of science and letters, by one who has been privileged to observe them from an unique angle is now being published in the hope that it may be of help, as well as of interest, to all earnest students of the comparatively new but ever growing science of Psychical Research.

## CHAPTER II

### CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

I AM going to begin this short narrative of Mrs. Piper's life and work, by answering the two questions which are invariably asked me by strangers. The first in point of interest is when and how did Mrs. Piper discover her psychic power; but the second, did Mrs. Piper's family ever object to the development of her power, which may be answered more briefly than the other, I will take first.

The only persons who might justifiably have objected to the development of my mother's power were my father, my sister and myself. In regard to my father I can emphatically state that from the time my mother discovered her psychic gift until his death in 1904, my father was as interested not only in my mother's phenomena themselves but in their ultimate solution, as was Mrs. Piper herself; while, if it be remembered that my sister and myself were only babies when my mother began her work, it will be seen that any objection we may have voiced, even if intelli-

gible, must have been futile. This, then, disposes of the question of any objection to her work on the part of Mrs. Piper's family.

In this connection, however, it may be of interest to add that no mystery was ever made of the work even when we were tiny children. It was always spoken of and discussed quite freely before us, so that as we grew up we came to regard not the possession of psychic gifts as unusual, but, if anything, their absence. Personally, my only regret to this day is that my mother's work for science occupied so much of her time that, when children, it deprived us of many precious hours of her companionship. But notwithstanding her busy life and the many engagements she had to fulfill there was one daily ritual with which she never allowed anything else to interfere, and this was always, herself, to hear our good-night prayer which as soon as we could lisp she had taught us; then, with a good-night kiss and "God bless you, darlings," she left us to our nurse's care.

Let me just add here, that tall, slender, with a grace and dignity difficult to describe, with clear cut Grecian features, and masses of golden hair, my mother very early in life formed my ideal of womanhood; and well do I remember when only a tiny tot asking God to "make me like mamma when I grow up!"

And now we come to the second, or as I have said, in point of interest, the first question. How and when did Mrs. Piper discover her psychic

power? To answer this we must first turn the pages of her life's story backward to her early childhood. One afternoon, after school, when my mother was about eight years old, she was playing by herself in the garden, busily engaged in the to her all absorbing occupation of pushing oak acorns through a hole in one of the garden seats apparently just made for that purpose. Suddenly, she felt a sharp blow on her right ear accompanied by a prolonged sibilent sound. This gradually resolved itself into the letter S. which was then followed by the words, "Aunt Sara, not dead, but with you still." Terrified, the child ran sobbing into the house holding on to the side of her head and calling loudly for her mother. My grandmother, an unusually calm, well-poised, and thoroughly practical woman tried for some time in vain to comfort her, for in answer to all her questioning as to what had happened the child only cried the harder, finally managing, however, to stammer out between her sobs, "Oh, I don't know! Something hit me on the ear and Aunt Sara said she wasn't dead but with you still."

Gently her mother soothed the frightened child until presently, with the happy resiliency of childhood, she was once again playing with her acorns as if nothing out of the usual had happened. But my grandmother, puzzled and a little troubled by the incident, made a note of the day and time at which it had occurred and then forgot all about it until several days later when, communication being slower then than now, word was received from a



Mrs. PIPER—as a child

distant part of the country that at the very hour and on the very day of her little daughter's strange experience, her sister "Aunt Sara" had passed out of the body suddenly and unexpectedly.

Only one more incident of a somewhat unusual character need be recorded here. One night, a few weeks after the experience related above, my mother had been put to bed as usual, and the light extinguished, when my grandmother, who had left the room only a few moments earlier, hastened back again in answer to the child's cries of "Mother, Mother!" It appears that on this occasion the child could not sleep because of "the bright light in the room and all the faces in it," as well as because "my bed," a big old-fashioned four-poster, "won't stop rocking." Her fears were quickly allayed, however, and holding her mother's hand she soon fell asleep, awaking the next morning refreshed and untroubled by any recollections of her experience the night before.

My mother's girlhood and young womanhood, except for an occasional experience of this kind, was perfectly normal in every way. The fourth of six children, according to my grandparents she was the ring leader in all their games and sports. Full of mischief and high spirits she was, in those days, the life of all about her. Although very fond of the great out-of-doors and out-door sports she, like every other girl of her time, became an expert needlewoman long before she was out of her "teens;" and many evidences of

## 14 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

her exquisite needlework are still preserved on the baby clothes of my sister and myself. She was also quick and good at her studies which in those days consisted chiefly of the three "Rs," spelling, geography, history and grammar. In spelling she excelled and at all the "Spelling Bees," a quaint New England custom which Whittier has immortalized in "School Days," she always came out at the top of the line having "spelt all the others down."

My mother's father and mother were both of English ancestry and thoroughly God-fearing people greatly beloved and respected in the community in which they lived. Deeply religious they were both members of the Congregational Church and in this faith my mother was brought up and remained until her visit to England in 1910 at which time she was baptized and confirmed in the Church of England. In her childhood days children were required to attend not only the long dull Sunday morning services and Sabbath Schools as well, but Sunday evening services and Friday night prayer meetings also! And to this régime, my mother had to conform as well as other children. Perhaps it is not so surprising, then, that on her ninth birthday her father presented her with a small Bible as "a reward for having read the sacred Book from cover to cover!" An accomplishment, I fear, of which few of us can boast to-day.

Both grandparents, I may add, were strong, healthy, normal people of their time.

My grandfather's death, many years ago, was the result of injuries received in the American Civil War; while my grandmother, a really remarkable old lady, died of pneumonia four years ago, at the age of eighty-eight.

## CHAPTER III

### MARRIAGE: AND THE FIRST MESSAGE

WHEN twenty-two years of age, my mother married William Piper of Boston, and three years later I was born. Soon after this my mother who was suffering from the effects of a coasting accident sustained many years previously, was persuaded by Mr. Piper, Sr. to consult a blind clairvoyant who was then attracting considerable attention by his remarkable medical diagnoses and subsequent cures. At this time, my parents were living with my father's family on Beacon Hill and my mother, at first reluctant, finally yielded to their entreaties and accompanied by my grandfather went to this clairvoyant's home on Sunday, June 19. During the consultation, while my mother was seated opposite the clairvoyant listening to his—as was later ascertained—accurate diagnosis of her trouble, she noticed that “his face seemed to become smaller and smaller, receding as it were into the distance, until gradually I lost all consciousness of my surroundings.”

This first period of unconsciousness, as my

grandfather has recorded, lasted only a few minutes during which nothing of very much importance occurred. But disturbed and greatly puzzled by her experience, it was only after much persuasion that my mother consented on the following Sunday to accompany my grandfather to one of the regular meetings, or circles, which the clairvoyant was accustomed to hold Sunday evenings at his home. These "circles" were held for the purposes of effecting "cures" and of "developing latent mediumship." At the meeting which my mother and grandfather attended on this particular Sunday evening, those present seated themselves in the form of a circle around which the clairvoyant then passed placing his hands on the head of each person in turn. When he reached my mother hardly had he put his hand on her head before she felt what she describes as "chills" and saw in front of her "a flood of light in which many strange faces appeared," while "a hand seemed to pass to and fro before my face." She then rose from her chair and, unaided, walked to a table in the centre of the room on which writing material had previously been placed. Picking up a pencil and paper and writing rapidly for a few minutes she then handed the written paper to a member of the circle and returned to her seat.

Recovering consciousness in a few minutes, but retaining no recollection of what had just transpired, Mrs. Piper was considerably surprised on being approached a little later by an elderly

gentleman who, after introducing himself, said in substance, "Young woman, I have been a spiritualist for over thirty years but the message you have just given me is the most remarkable I have ever received. It has given me fresh courage to go on, for I know now that my boy lives."

This man was Judge Frost, of Cambridge, a hard-headed and noted jurist who, it seems, had been driven, as many before and since have been driven, to seek in spiritualism and the realm of the occult an answer if may be to the world-old question—are they who have crossed the "Great Divide" forever lost to us; or have they but gone before to blaze a trail for those who follow after! For no one, man or woman, king or peasant, but sooner or later must take that same journey; by different paths, perhaps, but the same journey for all that.

Is it, then, so strange that those of us who have felt the sting of that terrible separation, have experienced the irreparable loss of the daily presence and ministrations of some dearly loved companion, should seek untiringly, leaving in our search no stone unturned, in the effort to solve that riddle which haunts our thoughts by day and our dreams at night—is Death for each and every one of us the end; the annihilation of the body, soul and mind; or is it, in very truth, for all of us the gateway to Life, a broader, richer, fuller existence than we here are able to conceive? Was Longfellow right, perchance, when he wrote those lines—

“There is no death ; what seems so is transition ;  
This Life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the Life Elysian,  
Whose portal we call death.”

Have Plato, Swedenborg, and Henry James the elder, grasped the heart of the mystery when they so confidently tell us that it is the life to come that is the Real ; while this life here, seemingly so solid, so definite, is but a dream world of existence, the shadow of the Real? Well, all speculation is idle except as it spurs us on to greater knowledge ; so let us return to Judge Frost's experience with Mrs. Piper. It seems that many years previous to his experience on this Sunday evening, Judge Frost had lost his only son under tragic circumstances which had left their inevitable mark on the father. The son, in the prime of life, had been fatally injured in an accident, had lingered in a semi-conscious condition for several months and then, eventually, had passed on without having, after the accident, again recognized either father or mother.

It appears that it was this failure on the part of the son to recognize his father which had left a wound so deep that for more than thirty years this respected jurist, although strictly *sub rosa* as it were, had tirelessly sought to obtain through various mediums some faint ray of hope that his beloved son had indeed “but gone before.” And on this Sunday evening he had at last obtained that for which he had so long sought—an identifying message from his boy. According to the

pencilled message which had been handed him by Mrs. Piper, Judge Frost's son had called him "Father"; had given his own name while assuring his father that he still "lived"; had mentioned that his head was as clear as ever now; and then had added to these details the emphatic statement that if his father could but know and understand all, he would realize that what had happened had indeed been for the best.

And in this manner Mrs. Piper's psychic power had been "discovered." A report of Judge Frost's experience having been spread abroad, as such things are, Mrs. Piper soon found herself literally besieged with requests for "sittings." But Mrs. Piper herself, far from being pleased with this unsought notoriety, was greatly distressed thereby with the result that, apart from the members of her immediate family and one or two intimate friends, she definitely refused to see anyone.

Thus, but for a curious turn of the wheel of Fate which brought Mrs. Piper to the attention of Prof. William James of Harvard College, an interesting and baffling psychological phenomenon might have been forever lost to the world. Destiny however, as we shall see, willed otherwise.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TESTIMONY OF PROFESSOR JAMES

IT was in the autumn of the year 1885 that Professor James' attention was directed to Mrs. Piper's phenomena in the following curious way.

My grandparents had at that time in their service an old Irish servant who had been with them for years and who, while good-natured, faithful, and utterly devoted to the family, possessed withal the Celtic imagination and ingrained superstition of her race. Now "Mary" had a sister "Bridget" who was also in service on "The Hill," and many and marvellous were the tales with which Mary regaled her sister concerning the "queer doings of my young Mrs. Piper."

It may quite well be that the fragments of conversation overheard by this good soul at various times and pieced together by an active imagination lost nothing in their re-telling. Be that as it may, some of Mary's tales eventually reached the ears of Prof. James' mother-in-law Mrs. Gibbins, a frequent visitor in the family where Bridget was employed, and this good lady's curiosity being

## 22 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

aroused, she forthwith appealed to Mrs. Piper for a sitting. For some inexplicable reason her request was granted, and Mrs. Gibbins being much impressed with the results of this first sitting succeeded in obtaining a sitting for her daughter the results of which appeared equally, if not more, surprising than her own.

I ought here to mention that Mrs. Gibbins was entirely unknown to Mrs. Piper, and when personally making the appointments both for herself and her daughter, she had taken special care that her identity should remain concealed.

Now, when Mrs. Gibbins and her daughter recounted their experiences with Mrs. Piper to Prof. James, although as he says, he played "the spirit fort on that occasion before his feminine relatives," he was, nevertheless, so impressed by "the marvellous character of the facts which they brought back" that a few days later he also sought and succeeded in obtaining a sitting for himself and Mrs. James. It was after this first sitting that he wrote to Mr. F. W. H. Myers, after first explaining that Mrs. Gibbins and her daughter had gone to Mrs. Piper "out of curiosity," as follows; "She (Mrs. Gibbins) returned" he says, "with the statement that Mrs. P. had given her a long string of names of members of the family, mostly christian names, together with facts about the persons mentioned and their relations to one another, the knowledge of which on her part was incomprehensible without supernormal powers. My sister-in-law went the next day with still



WILLIAM JAMES

better results, as she related them. Amongst other things, the medium had accurately described the circumstances of the writer of a letter which she held against her forehead, after Miss G. had given it to her. The letter was in Italian and its writer was known to but two persons in this country." (Proc. Vol. VI.)

Of his impressions regarding his own and his wife's first sitting Prof. James writes thus ; "My impression after the first visit, was that Mrs. P. was either possessed of supernormal powers, or knew the members of my wife's family by sight and had by some lucky coincidence become acquainted with such a multitude of their domestic circumstances as to produce the startling impression which she did. My later knowledge of her sittings and personal acquaintance with her has led me absolutely to reject the latter explanation, and to believe that she had supernormal powers." (Proc. Vol. VI.)

If any of us have any doubts that Prof. James fully realised even at that time the necessity of exercising the utmost caution and care when dealing with phenomena of this nature, or, think that he was a person whom it might have been easy to "hoodwink," the extract which I shall now quote from his review of E. Sargent's "Planchette," first published in the "Boston Daily Advertiser" in 1869, should banish any such doubts forever. "If our author," wrote Prof. James "in concert with some good mediums, had instituted some experiments in which everything should be protected

from the possibility of deceit, remembering that the morality of no one in such a case is to be taken for granted, and that such personal precautions cannot be offensively construed, he would probably have made a better contribution to clearing up the subject than he has now done." And again in the same paper, "But an author writing avowedly for the purpose of propagandism should have recognised more fully the attitude of this class, (that is, scientists) and recollected that one narrative personally vouched for and MINUTELY controlled, would be more apt to fix their attention, than a hundred of the striking but comparatively vaguely reported second-hand descriptions which fill many pages of this book. The present attitude of society," Prof. James shrewdly remarks, "on this whole question is as extraordinary and anomalous as it is discreditable to the pretensions of an age which prides itself on enlightenment and the diffusion of knowledge. We see tens of thousands of respectable people on the one hand admitting as facts of every day certainty, what tens of thousands of others, equally respectable, claim to be abject and contemptible delusion; while other tens of thousands are content to stand passively in the dark between these two hosts and in doubt, the matter meanwhile being—rightfully considered—one of really transcendent interest. In this state of things recrimination is merely lost time. Those people who have the interests of truth at heart should remember that personal dignity is of very little consequence."

The sentiments which Prof. James expresses so truly in this paper, although written now more than fifty years ago, are equally applicable to-day, except that the "tens of thousands" have now become, in each faction, "hundreds of thousands." What then, one wonders, will be the position in regard to these things at the end of another fifty years!

During the eighteen months following his first experience with Mrs. Piper, Prof. James not only had several other sittings, but virtually controlled all arrangements for the sittings which, under his direction, Mrs. Piper gave during this period, as well. All appointments for sitters were made with Mrs. Piper by Prof. James himself, and in no instance were the names of the sitter, or sitters, announced to her, or in her presence. In a report on certain phenomena obtained at this time, which was published in the Proc. of the American branch of the S.P.R., Prof. James says in part, "the medium showed a most startling intimacy with this family's affairs, talking of many matters known to no one outside, and which gossip could not possibly have conveyed to her ears. The details would prove nothing to the reader unless printed in extenso, with full notes by the sitters. It reverts, after all, to personal conviction. My own conviction is not evidence, but it seems fitting to record it. I am persuaded of the medium's honesty, and of the genuineness of her trance; and although at first disposed to think that the 'hits' she made were either lucky

## 26 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

coincidences, or the result of knowledge on her part of who the sitter was and of his or her affairs, I now believe her to be in possession of a power as yet unexplained."

Perhaps a few incidents which Prof. James regarded as particularly striking, taken from his report of his sittings with Mrs. Piper during the years 1885 and '86, may be of interest at this time, before passing on to other matters.

1. "My mother-in-law, on her return from Europe, spent a morning vainly seeking for her bank-book! Mrs. Piper, on being shortly afterwards asked where this book was, described the place so exactly that it was instantly found."
2. "I was told by her that the spirit of a boy named Robert F. was the companion of my lost infant. The F.'s were cousins of my wife's, living in a distant city. On my return home I mentioned the incident to my wife, saying, 'Your cousin did lose a baby, didn't she? But Mrs. Piper was wrong about its sex, name and age.' I then learned that Mrs. Piper had been quite right in all those particulars, and that mine was the wrong impression."
3. At the time of Mrs. Gibbin's second visit to Mrs. Piper, she was told that one of her daughters was suffering from a severe pain in her back on that day. This altogether unusual occurrence, unknown to the sitter, proved to be true.
4. An aunt, purporting to be communicating at one time, told Prof. James "of the condition of health of two members of the family in

## The Testimony of Prof. James 27

New York, of which we knew nothing at the time, and which was afterwards corroborated by letter."

5. At one sitting, Mrs. Piper told Prof. James "how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife warning her against all mediums, and then went off in a most amusing criticism, full of traits vifs, of the excellent woman's character."
6. During a sitting, at which Mrs. James and Prof. James' brother, Robertson James, were present, they were told that Prof. James' "Aunt Kate," who was then living in New York, had passed over that morning between two and half past, and that Prof. James would be made acquainted with the fact upon his return home. Commenting on this incident, Prof. James says—"On reaching home an hour later I found a telegram as follows—Aunt Kate passed away a few minutes after midnight."

Of these and many similar incidents in this first series of sittings with Mrs. Piper, Prof. James has this to say, "Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation of a large number of them has an irresistible effect. And I repeat again what I said before, that, taking everything that I know of Mrs. Piper into account, the result is to make me feel as absolutely certain as I am of any personal fact in the world that she knows things in her trances which she cannot possibly have heard in her waking state, and that the definite philosophy of her trances is yet to be found." (Proc. Vol. VI.)

Thus Prof. James wrote in 1890. And four years later, to quote but one other instance, he expressed a similar opinion on the occasion of his becoming president of the Society for Psychical Research. It was on this occasion, also, that he used the since famous illustration of the "white crow" when alluding to a point he wished to make in connection with Mrs. Piper. "If," he said, "I may be allowed the language of the professional logic shop, a universal proposition can be made untrue by a particular instance. If you wish to upset the law that all crows are black you must not seek to show that no crows are; it is enough if you prove one single crow to be white. My own white crow is Mrs. Piper. In the trances of this medium I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits."

## CHAPTER V

PROFESSOR JAMES AND DR. HODGSON

**D**URING the winter of 1886 and '87, Prof. James, finding himself overburdened with college and other responsibilities, and feeling that "any adequate circumnavigation of the phenomena would be too protracted a task for me to aspire just then to undertake," relinquished the personal supervision of Mrs. Piper's work. His interest, however, in the phenomenon which up to the time of his death he regarded as "the most baffling thing I know," continued unabated throughout his life. In this connection it is a great pleasure to record that throughout her long years of association with Prof. James and his investigation, my mother has only the happiest and most grateful recollections of this charming personality. His attitude toward her phenomena while sanely critical at all times, was yet unfailingly sympathetic, and to her, in common with all who were privileged to know him, his death in 1911 brought not only much sorrow but a sense of personal bereavement as well.

My own recollections of Prof. James are also of the happiest, and I want very briefly to record one or two little incidents which so well illustrate his thoughtfulness for those around him in spite of a life "overfreighted," as he himself said, with responsibility, and of his outstanding ability to meet on their own ground those younger than himself. It was very largely these two characteristics which Prof. James possessed in an unusual degree that so endeared him to young and old alike.

The first incident I have in mind occurred one year when after a protracted stay in England we returned to America in November, that miserable month of snow and cold. Our house which we had let, prior to leaving the States, was still occupied, with the result that we found ourselves two days before Thanksgiving, in a rented flat in Boston surrounded by boxed and crated furniture of all descriptions, and with not the slightest chance, moreover, of getting settled for a long time to come. Now, as probably everyone knows Thanksgiving in the States is essentially a holiday of happy family re-unions as well as of much feasting, and the prospect which loomed before us returned travellers, was not one that brought much happiness in its contemplation. It was into the midst of this chaos and general lugubriousness that Prof. James chanced, unexpectedly, with a greeting of welcome for my mother on her return; and, as a result of this unexpected visit, instead of the lonely holiday we had expected, we spent a merry Thanks-

giving Day with Prof. James and his family in their delightful home in Cambridge!

A second incident, which illustrates very clearly Prof. James' genius for meeting young people on their own level, occurred while we were at dinner on this occasion. Someone mentioned that I had recently won the cup in a tennis tournament whereupon Prof. James, turning to me with almost boyish enthusiasm asked quickly, "How big is your cup? And what is it made of?" I told him it was a very modest affair indeed, being made of copper and pewter, and not very big. But my answer did not seem to satisfy him quite and so he asked again "How *big* is it?" I illustrated then as well as I could, and smiling broadly, he remarked with much naïveté, "Oh, then mine *is* bigger than yours; and mine is made of silver!" If I remember correctly, his cup had been presented to him by his students at Harvard as a token of the love and veneration in which they held him.

Prof. James, like Dr. Hodgson and Sir Oliver Lodge, was the simplest and most unassuming of men and, as I have said, his thoughtfulness for others and their comfort was outstanding. One afternoon, prior to our visit to England in 1909, he brought Miss Alice Johnson, the research officer for the S.P.R., then on a visit to America, to call on my mother. During this visit the conversation chanced to turn on the atrocities of the English climate in November, whereupon Prof. James admonished us strictly "not to for-

get your goloshes for you will find the London mud ubiquitous." Again, it was to Prof. James' thoughtfulness that I owed, on this visit, my introduction to the Clarks of Harrow, a delightful, musical family with whom we all spent many happy hours.

Notwithstanding his busy, over-crowded life, Prof. James was never too busy, too impatient, nor too tired to answer patiently and understandingly all who in doubt, or perplexity, appealed to him for help. And it was in great measure due to his sympathetic encouragement and understanding of the many difficulties, with which she found herself confronted in the early days of her career, that my mother was able to adhere unflinchingly to the onerous course which she had set herself to follow. And later, when in addition to his college work, Prof. James felt himself unable to undertake further his investigation of her phenomena, it was he who wrote to various members of the English Society stating so effectually the puzzling and remarkable facts of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, and emphasizing so emphatically his opinion that the phenomenon was "a genuine mystery," that as a result of his representations, and only a few weeks later, Richard Hodgson arrived in America for the express purpose of continuing, on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, the investigation of that "phenomenon."

An Australian by birth and a graduate of Melbourne University, Richard Hodgson, LL.D.,

and Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, England, fresh from his recent exposé in India of Mme. Blavatsky,\* and with unbounded confidence in his ability to detect and uncover fraud wherever it existed, now undertook the investigation of these new psychic phenomena determined to expose the fraud which he was confident existed but which had thus far successfully cloaked in mystery, even to an astute mind like Prof. James' "phenomena undoubtedly of purely natural origin." In this spirit, then, and with this attitude of mind, Richard Hodgson undertook that investigation which was to last until his death in 1905, and which resulted not only in making him renounce all preconceived ideas and hypotheses, but which forced him, eventually, to accept the spiritistic hypothesis as being the only one that satisfactorily and adequately explained the phenomena of Mrs. Piper.

Considering, as we shall, throughout the following chapters, as well as incidents in Mrs. Piper's life, the development of her psychic gift, we shall better understand, perhaps, how her phenomena were able to effect the conversion of so redoubtable a sceptic as Richard Hodgson.

\* Proc. Part 9, Vol. 3.

## CHAPTER VI

### DR. HODGSON BEGINS HIS INVESTIGATION

WHEN Dr. Hodgson began his investigation with Mrs. Piper, in the spring of 1887, my father and mother were still living on Beacon Hill, Boston, with my grandparents. Shortly afterward, however, both parents, realising that my sister and I were in danger of being spoilt by the indiscriminate affection which our grandparents were lavishing upon us to a degree calculated to turn the heads of such tiny folk completely, decided it would be wiser if we were removed from the immediate scene of danger, and with this idea in mind they moved into a flat in "The Highlands," at that time a new and beautiful part of Boston.

This move, very much in the nature of an experiment—as flats in those days were a distinct innovation—was regarded rather sceptically by the grandparents; but the wisdom of it soon became apparent for my mother, never having had the responsibility and care of managing a household, would undoubtedly have found a house with its greater responsibilities, in conjunction

with her psychical work, too great a strain. As it was, the management of servants, the daily planning and general supervision which even a small household entails, in addition to her sittings, left all too little time for recreation or relaxation, disadvantages, however, which my mother felt to be immeasurably offset by the fact that we two irresponsible bits of humanity were no longer being subjected to the "spoiling" of adoring, but injudicious, grandparents!

Looking back, now, over my mother's life it is amazing to me how she ever accomplished what she did: for no one, who has not learned it by personal observation, can in any degree appreciate the fatigue and strain that constant psychical activity entails on the psychic; and this, even when it is unaccompanied by stress of any other kind. Only a woman of exceptional mentality and fine constitution could have come through my mother's life unscathed. In those early days, in addition to the management of her household and the general control and supervision of us children—for she could never bring herself to entrust us wholly to the care of nurse or governess—she was giving, on an average, two sittings a day; and these, for the most part, to persons totally unknown to her who came from all parts of the world, and for whom appointments had been made by Dr. Hodgson.

This condition of concealed identity on the part of the sitter, was in itself a great strain, and one the full significance of which can be appreciated

## 36 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

only when it is realised that Mrs. Piper's phenomena are accompanied by a deep sleep, or trance. Only the utmost confidence in the judgment and discernment of Dr. Hodgson could make the imposition of such a condition possible, a confidence, which it is almost an impertinence to add, was at all times merited in the fullest.

Apparently, one of the most difficult things for anyone who has come to know my mother at all intimately, to understand, is how a woman of such innate refinement and a temperament which from the first shrank with almost undue sensitiveness from publicity or notoriety in any form, should or could have deliberately chosen to devote her life to the development of a gift which would of necessity involve her in both. And to all who have questioned her on this point she has invariably replied, "When I found that I possessed a gift, power, or what you will, which to the best of my knowledge formed no part of my conscious Self, I determined then that I would give my life, if need be, in the attempt to fathom its true nature." And in later years, she has sometimes added, "But I wonder if, now, after all this time, we are any nearer the real solution than we were at the beginning." An arresting reflection and one which now, more than forty years after Mrs. Piper began her quest, can yet only be answered according to individual conviction.

But if this particular aim has not been attained, much else of value and importance *has* been ac-

complished. When Mrs. Piper began her work, spiritualism was befouled by vulgar, hysterical exploitation. Fraud, charlatantry, blatant deceit and trickery were everywhere rampant, and medium after medium after causing, for varying periods of time, the entire country to gape with wonder at the miracles which they performed, were eventually caught red-handed and ruthlessly exposed to a bewildered and indignant public.

Things had come to such a pass, indeed, that persons with a claim to any degree of respectability, let alone culture and refinement, seldom deigned to touch even the outer fringe of spiritualism so afraid were they of the reputation which clung round the whole subject at that time. It was as the American writer, Margaret Deland, so truly puts it when she says, writing of the early 90's, "It never occurred to me to investigate my own premise: 'there cannot be personality without an organism.' Such investigation meant, I thought, spiritualism—and the very word irritated me. It stood, in my mind, for trivialities and vulgarities; for mediumistic utterances, often offensive to taste, and frequently accompanied by clap-trap as old as the rods of the Egyptian priests that turned into serpents—and yet as young as those early 90's, when tables tipped and tambourines floated."

And what was true of America was likewise true of the European Continent and farthest India. Everywhere, the most startling spiritualistic phenomena appeared and for a time, swept

## 38 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

forward on a great wave of hysteria only to be beaten back eventually by the unmasking and exposé of their perpetrators. At no time in its history has spiritualism been in greater disrepute.

And Mrs. Piper knew this. It was not as if she had been ignorant of the true condition of affairs, or had failed to realise their seriousness. But secure in the knowledge of her own integrity, she courageously accepted the challenge which the whole world, at that time, was throwing in the face of spiritualism. And once having taken the first step forward she never turned back. When criticism and contumely were heaped upon her by friends and even relatives, she did not falter. She had placed her hand upon the plough and continued her furrow to the end, thus earning the respect and admiration of peoples in all parts of the globe, for I am told by those who know, that records of her remarkable phenomena have been translated into practically every tongue spoken to-day, including Chinese.

In his interesting little book, "Mrs. Piper and the Society for Psychical Research," Mons. Sage says in part, "Praise and warm gratitude are due to the men who have studied the case of Mrs. Piper. But we owe no less to Mrs. Piper, who has lent herself to the investigation with perfect good faith and pliability. None of those who have had any continued intercourse with her have a shadow of doubt of her sincerity. She has not taken the view that she was exercising a new kind of priesthood; she has under-

stood that she was an interesting anomaly for science and she has allowed science to study her."

And in this alone, if in nothing else, Mrs. Piper is unique. She, herself, in all these years has never made any claim for her power. She has never professed to be able to do this or that. Her attitude has always been one of simple desire to know the truth, to discover, if possible, the real nature of her power. Thus, when at various times in her career she has been approached by persons who, deeply impressed by her phenomena, have offered her every conceivable inducement to use her gift for their private interests, she has steadfastly refused, preferring to devote her time and power to the interests of science rather than to private exploitation.

But the decision, in the first place, to develop that power at all, was not so easily arrived at as perhaps I have made it appear. Notwithstanding her fundamental desire to understand, if might be, the *raison d'être* of her phenomena, her aliveness to the unsavoury atmosphere with which the subject was at that time surrounded, and the inevitableness of having her name ineradicably connected with it for all future time, caused her many moments of serious reflection and perplexity; and, it was only after the most earnest consideration and prayer, that her decision was finally taken. Moreover, in spite of her high courage and unswerving integrity of purpose, even she, in the face of the many trials, discouragement-

ments and disappointments, which she encountered from time to time, and above which she forced herself to rise, would have found it almost impossible to carry on but for her unshakable faith in the ability of Right to triumph over Wrong, and in a just and beneficent Power which indubitably watches over us all, even in our darkest hours.

This unalterable faith, so characteristic of my mother, even as it was of her mother, has throughout her life been to her a never failing source of strength. Not very long ago, when I was passing through a time of great mental and physical stress, in a letter full of quiet confidence and faith that all would yet end well, my mother, after referring briefly to a few of her own difficulties which she had overcome, ended her letter thus, "And so, in spite of all, my faith is strong. The Lord has never forsaken me even in my darkest hours, nor will He you now, my child. But you must have faith, for without faith we can accomplish nothing."

It was this same faith which not only carried my mother triumphantly through those difficult years when Dr. Hodgson, firm in his unbelief that psychical phenomena could be produced by other than normal means, mercilessly probed and probed for that which he confidently expected, if not hoped, to find; but which also enabled her, still in the interests of science, to give up her home within two years of its establishment, in order that by taking her out of her own

country, Dr. Hodgson might definitely prove to his own and to the satisfaction of all who were interested, whether or not Mrs. Piper's phenomena were produced by the procuration—through ordinary and recognised channels—of information concerning those who came to her for sittings. For only a sublime faith could have made so young a woman, and one so devoted to her home and family as my mother, take this drastic step, the wisdom of which only time and subsequent events could prove.

## CHAPTER VII

### DR. HODGSON'S PROPOSAL

IT must not be forgotten that Dr. Hodgson began his experiments with Mrs. Piper with the firm conviction partially inherent, partially based on previous experience, that here was another instance of fraud, cleverly perpetrated, undoubtedly, as that keen observer and able psychologist, William James had already placed himself on record as believing in its genuineness—but fraudulent nevertheless, for were not all psychical, or spiritualistic phenomena fraudulent in one way or another? Indeed, during the latter years of his investigation, I more than once heard Dr. Hodgson say, ruefully, that his amour propre had never quite recovered from the shock it received when he found himself forced to accept unreservedly the genuineness of the so-called “Piper phenomena.” It is, therefore, not surprising that such a staunch sceptic did not relinquish his ingrained conviction without a struggle, or that, when finally forced to admit and accept the genuineness of the trance state itself, he should still seek doggedly for some materialistic explanation of the phenomena produced.

How and by what means was the intimate knowledge of the lives of her sitters, their friends, and their relatives which Mrs. Piper displayed in

her trance state, acquired? This was the question which confronted Dr. Hodgson and which for years he tried to explain by any and all hypotheses except the spiritistic hypothesis.

The obvious materialistic explanation, that of information being obtained by agents, occurred to Dr. Hodgson at an early stage of his investigation and when, a little later, a member of the American branch of the English Society for Psychical Research of which Dr. Hodgson had been made secretary, definitely put forward the suggestion that it might be well to watch not only Mrs. Piper's movements, but the movements of the various members of her household as well, Dr. Hodgson decided forthwith to act upon it.

Had those responsible for this experiment stopped to consider the enormous expense that must have been involved in a system of espionage sufficiently extensive to provide Mrs. Piper with the minutiae of detail which she gave to her sitters, who even in those early days came to her from all over the world, such an hypothesis must, from the outset, have been recognised as untenable. Dr. Hodgson, however, actuated by his preconceived idea that all so-called psychical phenomena *must* of necessity have their origin in some materialistic source, and determined at all costs to trace these particular phenomena to their beginning, decided that no stone should be left unturned in the effort to find that beginning. It soon became evident, however, that whatever the ultimate explanation of the "Piper phenomena" might be, it did not

lie in any of the ordinary materialistic explanations; for the agent employed by Dr. Hodgson reported that neither Mr. Piper nor Mrs. Piper, nor any member of their household, questioned anyone indiscreetly, made any suspicious journeys, visited cemeteries in order to obtain names, dates or other information from the tombstones, or employed agents to act in this capacity for them.

So far, then, the phenomena remained as great a mystery as ever. But this experiment was productive of another result which had not been foreseen by its investigators; for when my mother first learned of this step which had "been taken in the interests of science," and notwithstanding the fact that it had resulted wholly to her credit, she was so distressed and indignant that such an action should have been thought necessary that she was sorely tempted to refuse, henceforth, to have anything further to do either with the work or with Dr. Hodgson. Her own consciousness of integrity and her sense of dignity were so outraged that it was difficult, almost impossible, for her to realise at that moment that had this step not been taken it *was* possible, incredible as it appeared to her, that from time to time some doubting Thomas *might* arise who would advance as a possible, even probable solution to an otherwise baffling enigma, the very hypothesis that had now and for all time been eliminated. Eventually, however, her sound common sense and good judgment triumphed over the first sense of personal indignity, and in this she was to a large extent, helped by Prof. James

who, while regretting the incident from her point of view, yet realised its importance to the future progress of the work. The following excerpt from one of Prof. James' letters to my mother at that time, is interesting as illustrative of his attitude in the matter. He writes in part :—" I hope neither you nor your husband will take the thing seriously, it has its very comic side, and you are the ones who can best afford to laugh at it. Above all, keep good friends with Hodgson, who is perhaps the most high minded and truthful man I know."

Considering the results of this acid test it would seem that one might be justified in expecting Dr. Hodgson, thenceforth, to have relaxed, to some extent at least, his hyper sceptical and critical attitude toward these particular phenomena : yet nothing of this kind occurred. Neither this conclusive test nor the precautions which Dr. Hodgson had adopted from the first of making the appointments for sitters himself ; introducing them to Mrs. Piper, if at all, under pseudonyms ; or bringing them into the room only after the trance state had begun, convinced him that a materialistic explanation was not to be discovered and with unabated zeal, therefore, he continued to seek for further and, if possible, more stringent precautions and experiments which might be tried.

Thus, a little later, he conceived the idea of removing Mrs. Piper from her normal surroundings and associations and placing her in a foreign country where she would be not only completely separated from her friends and family but would

46      Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

also be surrounded by people, customs, and environment entirely strange to her. This idea of Dr. Hodgson's having met with Prof. James' approval, he next communicated it to one or two members of the English S.P.R., who had previously shown themselves more than ordinarily interested in the reports of Mrs. Piper's phenomena, and in due course received a reply from Mr. F. W. H. Myers suggesting that Mrs. Piper should come to England for a short visit for the purpose of allowing the English members there to investigate her psychic power. This suggestion fitting in with Dr. Hodgson's purpose exactly, it only then remained for him to broach the subject to Mrs. Piper which he did in the following letter.

*18th Aug., 1889.*

"DEAR MRS. PIPER,

"Will you take into consideration the idea of visiting England, to remain there about a month, from say the middle of October to middle of November? My friend Myers suggests it in a letter to me. You would be in Cambridge part of the time and London part of the time. The object of the visit is to enable some of my friends in England, who are much interested in the accounts which they have had, to have some sittings with you. Please let me know at once whether you will think about it. I shall hope to see you at latter part of this week if you will be in Boston then, and can explain at more length than I can write. But I am anxious to hear from you at once on the matter. A letter to usual address will be forwarded to me. It would involve your leaving America about beginning of October and returning about end of November.

Yours sincerely,  
RICHARD HODGSON."

## CHAPTER VIII

ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 1889

WHEN Dr. Hodgson's letter reached her in the White Mountains, where she was resting during the summer months, my mother was not only amazed but greatly perturbed as well. What *could* these investigators be thinking about? Did they really mean and did they really expect her to leave her husband and two little children and travel three thousand miles across the Atlantic Ocean merely for the purpose of further probing, and testing, and experimenting? Surely this was more than could legitimately be expected of her! And, yet, what if she refused? What construction would be put upon such a decision were she to make it?

In her perplexity and anxiety she did, indeed, regret that she had ever undertaken her work, or, at least, that she had ever lent herself to scientific investigation and, until now, whole-hearted co-operation with her investigators. In her dilemma she appealed to my father for help and advice in making her decision; but he, in his earnest desire to help her most, and feeling that her own judg-

ment and intuition must inevitably prove her best counsellors, steadfastly refrained from influencing her one way or the other.

That the situation with which my mother was at this time faced was not an easy one, I think, will be readily conceded. My father was a man unusually fond of and dependant upon his home ; and while, in Dr. Hodgson's letter, a month had been suggested as the probable length of the proposed visit, it seemed not improbable, as eventually proved to be the case, that it might be longer. Then, again, my mother refused to consider the suggestion at all unless she was allowed to take her two little children, my sister and myself, with her ; while my father would not hear of being left alone subject only to the ministrations of a housekeeper.

At last, permission having been granted my mother to take us with her, and my father having expressed himself as willing to stay with his parents during the time we should be away, my mother decided to accept Dr. Hodgson's proposal.

Now began a time of much bustle and activity of which I remember little save the atmosphere of general excitement and a few outstanding features. The little home that had so recently been acquired was given up—it being impossible in those days to let anything quickly or for a short time—the pretty furniture and furnishings, which had given both parents so much pleasure in the choosing thereof, were boxed and crated, and through it all my mother was nerving herself to face, with

what courage she could, this new and greatest test.

Only a few months previously, my grandparents had bought a large house in Arlington Heights, a new and very beautiful suburb of Boston, and to this refuge, a fortnight before the date of sailing, the flat at the Highlands having by that time been dismantled and the boxed and crated furniture stored nearby, my father and "we two" betook ourselves; "mama" having gone to stay with Prof. and Mrs. James in New Hampshire for a brief holiday as well as to discuss the final arrangements for her forthcoming trip.

During this visit at Chocorua, my mother enjoyed many happy hours of climbing and fishing with Prof. James, Dr. Hodgson, and other members of the household and, incidentally, had the distinction of catching the largest bass that up to that time had ever been caught in Lake Chocorua. Of his impressions formed of my mother during this visit, Prof. James wrote to Mr. Myers—"I then learned to know her personally better than ever before and had confirmed in me the belief that she is an absolutely simple and genuine person. No one when challenged can give 'evidence' to others for such a belief as this. Yet we all live by them from day to day, and personally I should be willing to stake as much money on Mrs. Piper's honesty as on that of anyone I know, and am quite satisfied to leave my reputation for wisdom or folly, so far as human nature is concerned, to stand or fall by this declaration." And just before my mother sailed, Prof. James wrote

her a letter in which he wished her "God-speed," gave her much sound advice, and concluded characteristically thus, "and I hope you will continue to be the same simple, genuine, unassuming Yankee girl that you are now." Prof. James himself was nothing if not genuine and unassuming and nothing ever appealed to him more.

At last the actual day of our departure arrived and on Nov. 9th., 1889, we sailed from Boston on the old Cunarder "Scythia." I suppose I shall never forget that experience for the memory of it is as fresh to-day as at the time it happened. I was heartbroken at leaving my father and cried bitterly, begging and imploring him to "come too." Of course this could not be, but tiny tot that I was I could not grasp the exigency which made the separation necessary; nor realise that my grief was but making it harder for both parents. In an effort to distract my mind and so assuage my grief, my father tossed me from the pier several bright new pennies which, though I scrambled about the deck to find them, still left me unconsolable; and even after the big ship weighed anchor and the lonely figures on the dock had faded from our sight, I still cried bitterly. It was then that my little sister, always the angel of the family, bravely putting aside her own grief, patiently tried to comfort mine. I seem to hear her now, with her little arms about my neck—"Don't ky, Alta dear; please don't ky; you're making mama ky too." But the bitterest grief passes eventually and the next thing I remember was the jolly rope

swing which by the Captain's orders had been erected in the bow of the ship for "the little American ladies." It was not often, however, that we could make use of this new pleasure, for the crossing even for that time of year was the worst on record, and we steamed into the Mersey minus bulwarks and ventilators and with the ship covered with ice.

Dr. Hodgson had stipulated that my mother should not take our own nurse with her as the principal object of this visit to England was to surround her with everything new and strange; but, owing to the fortunate circumstances of "Minnie's" deciding to visit her uncle in Ireland at that particular time, she crossed with us as far as Queenstown and, in this way, my mother was relieved of a good deal of care and responsibility on the outward voyage.

When we called at Queenstown, my mother received this letter from Mr. Myers which so well illustrates his characteristic and kindly thoughtfulness for all with whom he was at any time associated.

LECKHAMPTON HOUSE,  
CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND,  
Nov., 14th., '89.

"DEAR MRS. PIPER,

I am so very glad you are coming after all! and we will do our best to make your visit pleasant. My wife and I hope that you will *stay with us till* you are suited with lodgings and we shall try to find lodgings *near* us, so that your children may be able to play in our garden.

I am hoping to meet you at Liverpool. The Cunard Company say that the "Scythia" is due there Monday evening, 18th., or Tuesday morning, 19th. I shall go there on Monday evening about 5—to the London and North Western Hotel, Lime Street (which adjoins the station from which you will have to leave) and I shall look out for you there that evening. I shall try and go out on the tender, or meet you at the landing-place; but at any rate I shall be at the hotel. Next morning, Tuesday 19th., I most unluckily have to go to *Edinburgh* to deliver a lecture—so I must leave Liverpool. But if you have not arrived on Monday evening so that I myself receive you, I shall see that a friend is there to receive you—Mr. J. A. Smith, whom you will much like. He was Mr. Gurney's secretary. In that case he will *conduct* you to Cambridge. If you are looking out for him or me on the tender, remember that he is a short young man with well cut features, black hair, mustache, but no beard; and that I am rather tall and stout, with short, greyish beard and probably great-coat with fur collar.

The journey from Liverpool to Cambridge is very easy. You leave Liverpool at 9.4 a.m. or noon, change at Bletchley, and reach Cambridge 3.49, or 6.13 p.m. There are no good trains later, and as you have young children with you you had better take one of these trains. But Smith or I will be there to help you. I will engage a nursemaid for you.

I hope you have had a good voyage and will get this at Queenstown.

Yours very truly,  
F. W. H. MYRES."

The "Scythia" did not reach Liverpool until Tuesday the 19th. Mrs. Piper was then met at the pier by a hotel servant who handed her another letter from Mr. Myres explaining his enforced absence on account of his lecture that

evening in Edinburgh. He also explained the arrangements he had made for her at the hotel, and introduced his friend Sir Oliver Lodge—then Prof. Lodge—whom he had finally delegated to meet her. Prof. Lodge took us all directly to the hotel and there my mother rested quietly until Mr. Myers arrived on Thursday morning when he conducted us to Leckhampton House, his charming home in Cambridge. When Mr. Myers introduced my mother to his wife Mrs. Myers, who spoke with a slight lisp, exclaimed in surprise: "Why, Mrs. Piper, you are not at all like what I expected! I thought you would wear your hair in frizettes and be dressed in majenta!"

## CHAPTER IX

MR. MYERS AND SIR OLIVER LODGE

ALMOST immediately following Mrs. Piper's arrival in Cambridge, the English series of eighty-three sittings were begun. This series, supervised by Mr. Myers, Prof. Lodge, and Mr. Walter Leaf, and given between November 1889 and February 1890, contains much of interest to students and laymen alike. The possibilities which the record of these phenomena suggest to even the casual reader are intriguing; and from the student invite close examination and study. Obviously, any analysis of them within the limits of this small volume, would be impossible, but the narration of a few incidents chosen at random from the printed records, as well as of the precautions which the English experimenters employed at this time, is essential for our purpose here.

Let us begin the narration by reading what Mr. Myers in his resumé tells us of the precautions which he personally thought it wise to take. Referring to Mrs. Piper, he writes: "She stayed first in my house, and I am convinced she

brought with her a very slender knowledge of English affairs or English people. The servant who attended on her and on her two young children was chosen by myself, and was a young woman from a country village whom I had full reason to believe to be both trustworthy and also quite ignorant of my own or my friends' affairs. For the most part I had myself not determined upon the persons whom I would invite to sit with her. I chose these sitters in great measure by chance; several of them were not resident in Cambridge; and (except in one or two cases where anonymity would have been hard to preserve) I brought them to her under false names—sometimes introducing them only when the trance had already begun." (Proc. Vol. 8).

So much for Cambridge and Mr. Myers! But Prof. Lodge exceeded even Mr. Myers in his precautionary measures. Prior to Mrs. Piper's stay in Liverpool, Mrs. Lodge—as she was then—had engaged an entire new staff of servants; and on the morning following Mrs. Piper's arrival, Prof. Lodge collected and safely locked away the family Bible—that oft times fertile source of dates and names—and all family photograph albums as well. Moreover, throughout the duration of her stay, all of Mrs. Piper's correspondence passed through Prof. Lodge's hands and permission, in practically all instances, was given him to read it.

One day, it having occurred to Prof. Lodge that some, at any rate, of the puzzling knowledge which Mrs. Piper displayed in the trance state

might be derived from a perusal of certain books, such, for instance, as directories, biographies, "Men of the Times," etc., he proceeded to search her luggage in toto without, however, it is hardly necessary to add, finding that for which he sought. Permission for this examination of her boxes was first obtained from Mrs. Piper though, naturally, the request was perfunctory, otherwise the search must have been regarded as futile.

At another time, being curious to know how many of the incidents concerning the boyhood days of two of his uncles—one having been dead some twenty years, while the other, a twin brother, was then "quite an old man"—with which "Phinuit" showed himself extraordinarily familiar, might perhaps have been obtained by normal means, Prof. Lodge sent a professional inquiry agent to the scene of the various childhood episodes, retailed by Phinuit, for the purpose of making full and exhaustive inquiries regarding them. This agent's report is interesting. "Mrs. Piper," he wrote to Prof. Lodge, "has certainly beaten me. My inquiries in modern Barking yield less information than she gave. Yet the most skilful agent could have done no more than secure the assistance of the local record keepers and the oldest inhabitants living. I have failed up to the present to prove from these records that there was a Smith's field, and, therefore, cannot trace the Smith boys. I cannot find anyone who remembers the creek incident; nor can I learn anything whatever

about Mrs. Cannon from the old people." And again, later, "The Tithe Collecting Agency is a failure. The Secretary has no old records, and no possible means whatever of assisting us to discover the Smith's field. I have no further ideas at present. Can you suggest anything?"

Is it surprising or to be wondered at, in view of the foregoing expedients and precautions which Prof. Lodge adopted, that he should have felt able, when making his report, to express his conclusions in these unequivocal terms— "Mrs. Piper's attitude is not one of deception." Or, again, "No conceivable deception on the part of Mrs. Piper can explain the facts."

During this visit to England Mrs. Piper stayed twice in Cambridge with Mr. and Mrs. Myers and Prof. and Mrs. Sidgwick; twice in Liverpool with Prof. and Mrs. Lodge; and twice in London in lodgings chosen for her by those in charge of the investigations. And wherever she stayed all her movements were planned and arranged for her, and even when shopping she was accompanied by some member of the Society. Moreover, to add to the general strain that she was under, during her stay in London both my mother and I succumbed to a sharp attack of influenza, and to be ill in a foreign country three thousand miles from home, surrounded by strangers however kindly, is neither cheering nor reassuring. However, under the skilful and sympathetic treatment of Mr. Myers' brother, Dr. Myers, we both recovered fairly quickly from a very nasty attack.

London, in those days, was not what it is now. For instance, in the little hotel, where the Society had taken rooms for us, candles were used for lighting purposes, and a tiny fireplace was supposed to heat adequately a good sized room, even in a particularly cold and gloomy November. Thus, to one accustomed to the more modern conveniences (even at that time), bright sunshine and blue skies of America, the feebly lighted and inadequately heated rooms, black fogs and leaden skies of England in winter, were bound to be depressing as well as extremely trying; all of which added appreciably to the constant strain under which my mother laboured during this first visit.

Although my personal recollections of this first visit are naturally rather hazy, there are one or two incidents which are still quite vivid. One is that of Mr. Myers playing "bear" with us and his own three little children Sylvia, Leo, and Harold, in the nursery at Leckhampton House, when, on hands and knees and "growling" ferociously amid shouts of laughter from us children, he crawled in and out among the nursery furniture until one by one he proved too quick for us and caught us all. And, again, his storming of our "fort," a grassy mound in the garden which we all struggled excitedly and valiantly but ineffectually to hold against him.

En passant, let me mention here, that my mother's outstanding personal recollection of this time is centred about Mr. Myers. His charming



F. W. H. MYERS

voice, great culture, poetical mind, and, withal, simple, kindly, and sympathetic nature was to her, during this visit, a source of helpfulness, pleasure and inspiration for which, and of which, she has always remained not only grateful but unforgetting.

Of Sir Oliver's family my only recollections of those early days is of "Violet," the eldest daughter, though then only two and a half years old, but who in later years was to become one of my closest and dearest friends, and the recollection is an amusing one. It was Sir Oliver's custom, whenever a sitting was in progress, to pin on the outside of his study door a slip of paper bearing the one word in large letters "SILENCE"; and little Violet, having been cautioned about this, never failed to say most solemnly and admonishingly as, for instance, we all trooped noisily down the passage when returning from a walk, "Hush! Papa's *smilence* is on the door."

These are the happy memories of that time. But there is, as well, one memory not so happy; and this concerns the first time in our lives when my sister and I were separated from "mama." During one of my mother's visits to "Leckhampton House," Mr. Myers, thinking it might be more restful for her, arranged for us and our nurse to have rooms in another house a little distance away but near enough for us to run across and play in his beautiful garden whenever we wished. Mr. Myers' only idea in making this arrangement, as I have said, was to afford my mother, who was devotion itself, greater rest and freedom for a

time ; but never shall I forget the evening when the change was made. When it finally became clear to me on this particular evening that we were not merely going for a walk but were, in fact, not returning to Leckhampton House that night, which meant of course being separated from "mama," I refused pointblank and quite definitely to budge one inch ; and the more my mother tried to reason with me the more I sobbed and the tighter I clung to her. Finally, feeling the coming separation herself very keenly and greatly affected by my stormy grief she managed to release herself from my grasp and disappeared into the house saying that she would be out again in a moment. But she did not return, alas ! Instead, out came Mr. Myers very kind but exceedingly firm ; and recognising the inevitable at last, I allowed the long suffering nurse to lead me still sobbing away.

Looking back across the years from this distance and trying to reconstruct and visualise some at least of my mother's experiences during that early visit to England, I wonder how, surrounded by strangers and an atmosphere of critical suspicion wherever she went, a woman of her highly-strung, sensitive nature could have endured with any degree of fortitude, those months of investigation in a strange land. And I find the only answer to my wonderings in the personality of the woman herself. It is as Lady Lodge said to a friend last autumn—"When I first knew that my husband and Mr. Myers wanted the medium with whom they desired to experiment to stay in our house,

I was very much opposed to the whole idea. I wasn't interested then in Psychological Research or in mediums, though because of my husband's great interest I finally acquiesced to his proposal. Then, when Mrs. Piper came to us and I saw that beautiful face and realised the utter refinement of the woman, I became interested in my husband's investigations in spite of myself."

And so it came about that when Mrs. Piper sailed from Liverpool for New York in February 1890, she watched the shores of England fade from view with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret. During her brief sojourn there, she had made many friends and had come triumphantly through an ordeal which had sometimes sorely taxed both her courage and her strength, but the stress had indeed been great and she was very tired. Then too, she had been away from her own country and those she loved for what was beginning to seem a long long time, and the call of home was becoming increasingly urgent with every passing day. In spite of this, however, the culture, the refinement, and the old world charm of England had wound themselves very tightly about her heart so that it was not wholly with unalloyed joy that she saw the hats of Prof. Lodge and Mr. Thompson which they had boyishly placed on the ends of their sticks and were waving in farewell, gradually fade into the mists of the Mersey as the White Star Liner slowly drew away from the little tender, homeward bound!

## CHAPTER X

### TRANCE CONDITIONS

NOW, in the previous chapter we have noted the effective surveillance with which Mrs. Piper was surrounded in England and it might be as well at this juncture to point out that, allowances being made for her different mode of living in America—that is, living in her own home, for instance—much the same watchfulness and supervision of her movements surrounded her there.

In regard to the sittings in the States, all new sitters were invariably accompanied by either Dr. Hodgson or his secretary Miss Lucy Edmunds, and both took every possible precaution to conceal the sitter's identity. An amusing illustration of Dr. Hodgson's extreme caution in this particular has recently come to my knowledge. It appears that one very wet morning as Dr. Hodgson and a sitter entered the house at Arlington Heights, the lady deposited her dripping umbrella in the stand provided for that purpose near the front door. Whereupon Dr. Hodgson, who was already half-

way up the stairs, noticing her action immediately rushed down again, and seizing her by the arm admonished her brusquely thus—"You idiot! Haven't you any more sense than to do a thing like that? Don't you know that you might be accused of being in collusion with Mrs. Piper if you leave your umbrella there? It might be thought that by this means you were conveying a note, or other information to Mrs. Piper through one of her daughters, for instance. Bring your umbrella upstairs, even if it is wet, and in future mind what you're about!"

Then there was the case of Prof. Hyslop who on the occasion of his first two or three sittings with Mrs. Piper, took the extraordinary precaution of putting on a mask before he got out of the cab, removed it only after Mrs. Piper was entranced, and resumed it before she awoke!

I have sometimes, in looking back upon those old days, wondered what the old cabby, Mr. Dow, must have thought of the actions of some of his patrons; or of the scraps of conversation which must occasionally have reached his ears! And speaking of this reminds me of another recollection of Dr. Hodgson. Meticulous as he was in concealing the sitter's identity, he was, if possible, even more careful about keeping the appointments made for sitters, never allowing any circumstance within human control to interfere with the arrangements made by "Imperator." If a sitter for whom an appointment had been made was prevented from keeping that appointment by illness or any other

unforeseen or unavoidable reason, Dr. Hodgson himself, or Miss Edmunds, would take it on behalf of the sitter.

This punctiliousness on Dr. Hodgson's part was sometimes carried into effect only under great difficulties and inconvenience as, for instance, when the long three quarter of a mile hill from the station to our house was a glare of ice in winter. No conveyance was then available, but undeterred Dr. Hodgson many a time made the journey on foot though not without grave personal risk. The ascent was bad enough but the descent infinitely worse. This redoubtable spirit, however, proved himself equal to the emergency and borrowing one of our "flexible flyers" imperturbably coasted that perilous three-quarters of a mile to the station. Something of the man's character and utter absorption in his work can be deduced from this.

I have already mentioned several of the precautions in connection with the sitters and the sittings which Dr. Hodgson felt it expedient to take. There yet remains, however, his interdiction with regard to the daily newspaper which perhaps is the most extraordinary of all. Thinking that possibly something regarding a prospective sitter might be gleaned through this medium by Mrs. Piper, Dr. Hodgson forbade her to see a morning newspaper on the days sittings were to be given. And, moreover, he carried his zeal so far that he went to the one and only local newsagent at the Heights and ordered him on no account to deliver a morning paper to Mrs. Piper on the first three

days of the week! It is only fair to explain, however, that many of the sitters who were known to Mrs. Piper were prominent in the public eye and it was quite possible that some item of interest regarding them might have appeared in the paper prior to their having a sitting. An example of this can be found in the incident of the death of "Mme. Elisa's friend 'F'", recorded in Chapter XIV. But it all goes to show how Mrs. Piper's movements were watched and controlled, and how little she was allowed, in those days, to live her life in her own way.

Now, apart from the precautionary measures taken to prevent Mrs. Piper obtaining knowledge of her sitters in any normal way, both Dr. Hodgson and Prof. James (I am speaking now of the very early days) felt it important that certain tests should be made to establish definitely and once and for all whether the trance into which Mrs. Piper appeared to pass during the sitting, was in truth the deep sleep it seemed to be, or was, perhaps, an exceedingly cleverly feigned condition. To this end, then, certain rather drastic measures were employed.

Among other experiments, Prof. James reported that during trance he had found Mrs. Piper's lips and tongue insensible to pain, and Dr. Hodgson later confirmed this statement by placing a spoonful of last in Mrs. Piper's mouth no notice whatever being taken of the procedure. Hodgson, also, applied strong ammonia to the nostrils taking "especial pains to see that the ammonia was actually inhaled"

without, however, eliciting any signs of discomfort. Experiments in pinching "sometimes rather severely" were also tried, the effect of which was to make the affected parts "feel like a stick." And once, when Dr. Hodgson suddenly placed a lighted match against the forearm, in reply to his question if pain was felt, he was told "No, felt cold."

But the most drastic experiment ever tried in those early days was when Prof. James, who was a fully qualified physician as well as psychologist, during a sitting at which Mrs. James was present, made a small incision in Mrs. Piper's left wrist. During the trance state no notice was taken of this action and the wound did not bleed; but immediately upon awaking the wound bled freely, and Mrs. Piper bears the slight scar the incision left on her wrist, to-day.

In England, a few similar experiments were tried. Prof. Lodge pushed a needle suddenly into Mrs. Piper's hand; and at another time Prof. Richet inserted a feather up her nostril. But in neither case was any notice taken of the act or any discomfort felt.

To anyone who knows Mrs. Piper well in every-day life, and realises her extreme sensibility to pain, these experiments afford food for thought. In normal life Mrs. Piper is a true "Sensitive" in all ways. An almost imperceptible bruise will cause the skin to remain discoloured for days; while an inconsequential burn from sealing wax I have known to cause her great pain and discomfort for some time.

Perhaps, while we are considering the trance state thus particularly, it may be interesting to read Mrs. Piper's own description of her sensations while passing in and out of this deep sleep in which so much of her life has been spent. "I feel," she says, "as if something were passing over my brain making it numb; a sensation similar to that I experienced when I was etherised, only the unpleasant odour of the ether is absent. I feel a little cold, too, not very, just a little, as if a cold breeze passed over me, and people and objects become smaller until they finally disappear; then, I know nothing more until I wake up, when the first thing I am conscious of is a bright, very very bright light, and then darkness, such darkness. My hands and arms begin to tingle just as one's foot tingles after it has 'been asleep,' and I see, as if from a great distance, objects and people in the room; but," she adds "they are very small and very black." A propos of this last remark, Mrs. Piper's first greeting to the sitter, as she awakes from her sleep is, invariably, "Oh! how black you are!" And a further interesting point is that she always resumes the conversation at that point where it was broken off before the sitting began.

Perhaps it is not unnatural that when I consider all that Mrs. Piper has been subjected to in the course of her long, arduous years of investigation and then consider the conditions attending the production of phenomena by the mediums springing up around us to-day, I should find myself seriously

68      Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

wondering of how many of these that astute, clear thinker William James, could write confidently, as he wrote of Mrs. Piper shortly before his death—  
“ Dr. Hodgson feels that the hypothesis of fraud cannot be seriously entertained. I agree with him absolutely. The medium has been under observation, much of the time under close observation, as to most of the conditions of her life, by a large number of persons, eager many of them to pounce upon any suspicious circumstances, for fifteen years. During that time not only has there not been one single suspicious circumstance remarked but not one suggestion has ever been made from any quarter which might lead possibly to explain how the medium, living the apparent life she leads, could possibly collect the information about so many sitters by natural means.”

## CHAPTER XI

### HOME LIFE

IT is scarcely to be wondered at that at the conclusion of her first visit to England, Mrs. Piper should have felt the effects of the long strain to which she had been subjected by the exacting conditions imposed upon her during those four months of investigation ; or that, upon her return to America she should have felt it expedient to rest for several months before resuming her work for Dr. Hodgson. Not only had the English climate proved trying but the two long sittings each day as well as the atmosphere of secrecy and of exaggerated caution with which she had been constantly surrounded were bound to react adversely on a sensitive nature and temperament like Mrs. Piper's, and it was not until the December following her return to America in the previous February, that she again resumed her sittings.

During the winter and early spring months after our return, we occupied the house at Arlington Heights which had been rented prior to our leaving America ; but with the coming of

summer our grandparents, who had by that time found their big house much too large and too lonely for themselves, successfully persuaded my father and mother to share it with them. This arrangement was a particularly happy one for the grandparents, as we were the only grandchildren—our father being an only child—and as it also proved a congenial one to the entourage of both families, we soon adjusted ourselves to the new conditions; and the years that then ensued were not only productive of a steady development in my mother's power and phenomena but were, for us all, the happiest that I remember.

Arlington Heights, the suburb in which those years were spent, was one of the most healthful and beautiful places imaginable. Our house was nearly at the top of a very long hill, from the summit of which could be seen hundreds of other suburbs stretching in every direction, their lights at night sparkling and twinkling like millions of tiny glow worms; and here in this beautiful spot, with its clear health-giving air, my sister and I grew from childhood to young womanhood flourishing like young bay trees!

In those days, the winters were noted for their severity, the earth being covered with its white blanket from early November to late April, while the snow drifts often reached a height of ten or twelve feet. But how we loved those hard snowy winters! In our rubber boots we would wade through the snow-drifts, tumbling and roll-

ing each other about until we resembled veritable snow-men, while our big St. Bernard dog gambolled and frisked with us in utter joy and abandonment.

One of our favourite sports, after the snow-ploughs had levelled and smoothed the snow in the road, was to start just outside our house and coast the entire length of the hill with the wind howling and whistling in our ears and occasionally cutting our cheeks like knives: then, the bottom of the hill being reached, up we climbed again, and down we went once more, "Gyp" reaching the foot of the hill a "close second."

No wonder our cheeks glowed and our little bodies radiated health and strength. But I have sometimes wondered if our governess, poor soul, enjoyed this strenuous sport as we did! I rather suspect that she was not sorry, when the shadows lengthened and the short winter day drew to a close, to seek the warmth and shelter of the big house. Though that, too, was a happy time for us when, changed and rested, we drew our chairs close to "grandma's" knee, or crept into her lap, while she read us some bewitching fairy tale and, if we were very good, perhaps two!

Those were happy days indeed! And little did we realise at that time the constant thought and care with which our lives were being directed by our mother. For, notwithstanding the exacting demands made upon her time and energy by her work and other duties, she never failed to exercise the most careful supervision, not only

of our health and dress, but of our education as well. First our governesses, then our schools were chosen with the greatest care and forethought, while the monthly report cards—those oftentimes damning evidence of time not too wisely spent—were scrutinised with an attention which not infrequently we felt they might quite easily have been spared! Our musical instruction and progress, too, received the same careful and intelligent consideration, the inevitable and unwearying hours of daily practice being given especial care.

But what to my mind is most important of all, is the fact, that wise counsellor and guide though she always was, our mother was also our confidante. Never was she too busy or too tired to listen to and sympathise with our childish troubles, griefs and joys; and what is better still, to enter into them with an understanding of our needs which only many years later did I learn to appreciate fully. Numerous and varied were the wise counsels which she unobtrusively gave us both, and much that I unconsciously absorbed then has helped me to meet and overcome successfully many unexpected, and sometimes difficult problems which I have since encountered. At heart, a deeply religious woman, she early taught us that prayer was the greatest force for good in life and it is to her own unfaltering faith in such a power that she attributes in great measure such success as she has had.

The memory of these years is especially dear to me, also, because of their close association



Mrs. Piper soon after her marriage  
*(My Father's favourite photograph of my Mother)*

with my father who died when I was barely twenty. Very dignified and reserved, and a man of deep feeling, my father although friendly and sociable with many, was yet well known to but a few. He was a great student and passionately fond of music yet, withal, a keen lover of all out-door sport. Croquet, of which game he made a science, was his hobby, and often in early spring and late autumn when the days were short and the dark came quickly, it was nothing unusual for us to finish a match by the aid of bits of white cloth tied on to the tops of the hoops, or of lanterns placed by the side of them.

In addition to his love for music, he was a fair performer himself on both the violin and piano, and many and ingenious were the devices he originated to encourage us when children to practice faithfully ; while, as soon as it was at all practicable, he insisted, oftentimes much to our annoyance ! on regular ensemble practice. At these times, my sister played the piano, and my father and I the violin, the trio thus formed, often becoming a quartette by the addition of the flute, or 'cello, of a friend.

One other trait of my father's character which is outstanding in my memory of him, is that of his punctiliousness in keeping engagements. Never would he break one engagement in order to take advantage of another, as is so frequently done now-a-days, and I have always been grateful that this same punctiliousness he successfully inculcated upon both my sister and myself.

For us all, winter was a very busy time, and it was always with a feeling of relief that each year, when our school closed and her work ceased, our mother sought the rest and quiet of some little-frequented village in the beautiful range of hills in new Hampshire known as the "White Mountains," and there, with our big dog, horse and donkey, we remained tucked away in seclusion until the shortening days sent us back again to town.

This peace and quiet, right away from the mass of humanity which forced its griefs and cares upon her throughout the winter, were essential for our mother ; and its wisdom as regards my sister and myself was made apparent in the renewed vigour and restored interest with which we resumed our school work each autumn. Moreover, for me personally, these restful summer days, spent far from the conventions and amenities of town life, meant time to observe and to grow to love Nature, as I never, otherwise, would have done ; for then it was that I learned to realise that gentle strength and deep inward peace which close association with the wonders and marvels of God's unspoiled handiwork must always bring to one who honestly seeks it. It is only by dropping all artificialities and getting near to the heart of nature that one is able to find one's real self, that mysterious hidden self which, nevertheless, exists in each and every one of us. And it was the knowledge of just these facts born of her own deep appreciation for and great love of nature, together with the

realisation that her health and therefore her work must benefit from such a course, that made my mother, each year, seek that rest and quiet among "the White Mountains" where, whenever possible, our father joined us.

Eventually, but always too soon, autumn, heralded by its blazing foliage when every tree and shrub flamed with beauty, came creeping slowly down upon us turning, perforce, our thoughts toward home; and, yet, so loath were we to leave our sanctuary that, not until the trees in very truth stood out "against the sky like lace," did we at last, refreshed and invigorated, return to the winter's work. But I verily believe that those days and hours of close and joyous companionship with father and mother will ever stand out in our memories as among the happiest of those happy years of our lives.

## CHAPTER XII

“G.P.”

AS I have said, the years following my mother's first visit to England and until my father's death in 1904 were not only particularly happy years but years noticeable for the development of my mother's power and phenomena as well. 'Dr. Phinuit' remained in control until 1892 and in a letter to Mrs. Piper, headed Boston and dated October 20th, 1891, Dr. Hodgson refers to the work being done by "Phinuit," at that time, in the following enthusiastic manner:—

BOSTON, MASS.,  
*Oct. 20th, 1891.*

“DEAR MRS. PIPER,

Bravo! Splendid sitting on Friday. I have report. Lots of details right previously unknown to sitter. Sitter wished me to thank you. Miss Edmunds will tell you details. I should like to send Miss E. out this week for a Society sitting if you can arrange it. Indeed I am very anxious to have several as soon as possible and then begin again and have a lot more. I shall not be able to go myself for a week or so, not until

I get the last word off about Phinuit to England. Phinuit seems to be right on the war path now and I want to keep him at it while he is good and fresh and uncontaminated with thousands of relatives and sick people that used to take up all his time (!!!)

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,  
RICHARD HODGSON.”

It was also during these years (1892) that the control known as “George Pelham” (pseudonym), or “G.P.”, first manifested itself, and although “Phinuit” continued to communicate—his last appearance being on Jan. 24th, 1897—to all intents and purposes “G.P.”, from the time he first appeared, became the principal communicator and control. It was “George Pelham” who developed the automatic writing which, while not an entirely new phenomenon in Mrs. Piper’s work, had heretofore been of the briefest and most scrappy kind. This means of communication, although much less of a strain on the medium, undoubtedly robbed the communications of a great deal of that “dramatic” quality which had previously been so noticeable a characteristic of her phenomena. In the “Phinuit” days the voice had been the chief means of communication, and the sense of reality produced upon the sitter by the deep gruff voice of this control was one of the outstanding features of that period. The contrast between the heavy rather rough voice of “Phinuit” and the light, pleasantly modulated voice of Mrs. Piper, was not only striking in the extreme but was also convin-

cingly suggestive of the presence of an extraneous personality.

The new control, "George Pelham," although he had been educated as a lawyer, had preferred to devote himself to philosophy and literature rather than to his own chosen profession, and before his death, had published at least two books which had been warmly commented upon by competent critics. He and Dr. Hodgson were fond of arguing on the possibilities of a future life, Pelham strongly contending that such an idea was not only improbable but inconceivable, while Dr. Hodgson held that, if not probable, it was at least conceivable. Eventually, during one of the last conversations on this mooted question shortly before his death, Pelham recanted on this particular point sufficiently to promise that if he died first and found Hodgson's contention to be correct he would certainly return and "make things lively" in an effort to establish the fact. A few months later, in February 1892, when but thirty-two years of age, he was killed in New York by a fall; and on March 22, only four or five weeks later, he made his first appearance as a communicator during a sitting at which Dr. Hodgson and a friend were present. From that time onward, he made good his promise that, if he died first and found a future life to be a reality, he would "make things lively" in his efforts to prove his discovery to an anxious but sceptical world.

The following interesting datum of the "G.P."

régime must make one, whatever his views, pause and think. During the years covering the period from 1892 to 1898 “G.P.” saw and talked with one hundred and thirty persons of which number thirty had been previously known to him during his life time, and not only did he recognise and correctly call by name each one of these thirty sitters, but he used with each, as well, both the tone and the manner which he had been accustomed to use when living. Not once did he mistake a stranger for a friend, or vice versâ.

During the autumn of 1893 Dr. Hodgson, who was at that time visiting the World Fair, wrote Mrs. Piper a letter in which he made the following passing reference to the continued improvement in the sittings.

CHICAGO,  
*October, 31, 1893.*

“DEAR MRS. PIPER,

Yours of the 26th reached me in Chicago. I hope to leave in a week or so. I hear that your sittings are better than ever and of course am delighted to hear it, though I don't know any details yet. And I am very glad indeed that you feel well . . . It was a treat to get your letter and know you are first rate. I have seen nearly all of the World's Fair that I care to see, and am interviewing our members and other persons here who have had experiences. But I shall be heartily pleased when I start on my way back.

With best remembrances and love to Alta and Minerva, and tell them I hope they are improving famously.

Yours sincerely,  
RICHARD HODGSON.”

## 80 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

About that same time, or a little later, Mr. Myers who was then visiting America, wrote the following letter to Mrs. Piper which shows clearly both his continued and keen interest in her phenomena and his delightfully sympathetic and human personality.

C/o DR. HODGSON,  
5, Boylston Place,  
Boston, Mass.

"MY DEAR MRS. PIPER,

I have followed with great sympathy the accounts which Dr. Hodgson has sent me of your illness and recovery. I do trust that you have now before you a life much freer from suffering and weakness; although I fear not for one still not quite strong.

My wife sends you very kind remembrances as also do Prof. and Mrs. Sidgwick, Prof. and Mrs. Lodge, Mr. Leaf and my brother Dr. Myers. The interest in your phenomena continues to *grow* in England; and the record in our *Proceedings* is more and more bought and studied. Prof. Lodge in his paper for the Chicago Congress (and I also in mine) are alluding to the marvellous phenomena obtained through you. You will doubtless see a report.

One of my main hopes in visiting America was to see you again and I was disappointed to hear that you were not in Boston. But I hope to *return* to Boston after the Chicago Congress, about September 8-12, and I do most earnestly hope that you may then be able to give me the pleasure of seeing you again.

I hope that your two little girls are well and happy.

I should, of course, be very glad if opportunity offered to make the acquaintance of other members of your family and to tell them how deeply my friends and I value your phenomena.

Hoping to see you before long, I remain, dear  
Mrs. Piper,

Yours very sincerely,  
F. W. H. MYERS.

You will be writing, no doubt, to Dr. Hodgson—do  
not trouble to send me a separate reply.”

At that time Mrs. Piper, as was her custom,  
was spending the summer holidays in the White  
Mountains, but upon receipt of Mr. Myers' letter,  
she arranged to return to Boston in time to see  
him on his way back from Chicago and notified  
Dr. Hodgson to this effect receiving in reply  
the following acknowledgment from Mr. Myers.

“DEAR MRS. PIPER,

I was so very glad to hear from your  
letter of yesterday to Dr. Hodgson that we shall have  
the pleasure of seeing you early in September; I hope  
at Boston. We shall probably return from Bar Harbour  
to Boston about September 7, and shall hope to see  
you then and to have several days in which to meet  
you so as not to fatigue you. Mr. Hodgson tells me  
wonderful things of your recent sittings! You will write,  
no doubt, to him as soon as you can as to plans. Our  
time is veritably *full!* but sittings with you come above  
everything else in my view!

kindest remembrances!

Yours truly,  
F. W. H. MYERS.”

Mrs. Piper returned to town as she had pro-  
mised, and gave Mr. Myers the sittings he so  
much desired little realising that they would be  
the last that he would ever have, for Mr. Myers'

## 82      Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

death occurred in 1901 and as, in the interim, he did not re-visit the United States, or Mrs. Piper go to England, she never saw him again. In the passing of this profound scholar and poet, the English Society for Psychical Research lost not only one of its original founders, but one of the most enthusiastic, earnest and able, albeit kindly and sympathetic investigators it has ever had.

## CHAPTER XIII

### “IMPERATOR GROUP”

**I**N 1893, Mrs. Piper was obliged to undergo an operation for the injury received in the coasting accident of so many years ago: and again, three years later, in 1896, a second operation, for hernia, was performed. Since that time, however, her health has been excellent; and it is an interesting fact and one worth noting, that with the improvement in health her phenomena also improved markedly.

Mrs. Piper's phenomena, or perhaps better the development of them, falls readily into three stages, or periods, which may be classified as follows: the first stage which began with the inception of her power in 1884 and continued for a period of eight years under the control of the quaint and whimsical personality known as “Dr. Phinuit;” the second, beginning with the advent, in 1892, of George Pelman—or G.P. as this control was generally known—as the principal communicator; and the third, or last stage which began in 1897 with the appearance of the group of controls known as the “Imperator Group,”

## 84 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

and which still continues at the present time. The second period of development witnessed the gradual cessation of the Phinuit control; but in the third stage "G.P.," although yielding primary control of the "machine," yet continues to manifest at various times and with certain sitters.

All three stages have their own particular "earmarks," each in its way being distinct and separate from the others. Thus the bluff, rough-and-ready but withal kindly and humorous Phinuit, of the first period, was utterly unlike the straightforward but more polished "G.P." of the second period; while "G.P.," in turn, is the antithesis of the gentle, patient, and reverent "Rector" who acts as the "amanuensis" for the "Imperator Group" and so becomes the principal communicator of the third period. In this connection it has aptly been said of Mrs. Piper that could she of her own accord impersonate, with such striking realism, the many and diverse personalities which have from time to time manifested in her sittings, she would indeed be the greatest actress the world has ever known.

In the early days of Mrs. Piper's phenomena, and throughout "Phinuit's" régime, the voice was used, and among the sitters of this period "Phinuit" numbered many warm friends, chief among whom, perhaps, was Prof. Lodge—as he was then—whom "Phinuit" always addressed as "Captain," and by whom the withdrawal, in January, 1897, of this interesting personality was regarded with genuine regret. When "G.P."

assumed control of the phenomena in 1892  
"Phinuit" still continued to use the voice; while  
"G.P.", although he also uses the voice upon

I.S.D.

We leave you and may  
the blessings of  
Heaven rest on you

Am I your enemy again?

George  
Stonebridge  
General

SPECIMEN OF AUTOMATIC WRITING.

occasions, yet prefers, as his medium of communication, the automatic writing which, during his leadership, he developed to a high degree of efficiency.

An interesting fact which Dr. Hodgson records, is that of two or three sitters being communicated with separately, sometimes for an hour at a time, by means of the hand and voice being used by the controls simultaneously. On one or two occasions, three sitters have received three communications, completely distinct in character, by means of the simultaneous use of both hands and the voice. An example of this triplicate control is recorded in a sitting of Miss Edmunds'—Dr. Hodgson's secretary—during which her deceased sister wrote with one hand, "G.P." with the other, while "Phinuit" used the voice. (Proc. Vol. XII., p. 293-4).

Not infrequently, sitters find difficulty in reading the automatic script. Dr. Hodgson, however, was an adept, as might perhaps be expected, at deciphering it; and neither my sister nor I experience any particular difficulty in reading it as it is written. To some extent this is due, undoubtedly, to more or less familiarity with the writing which very likely does present certain difficulties especially to the novice and particularly when a word, or words, are superimposed; but, in my experience, the tension and general sense of strangeness experienced by the average sitter at a first, or even second, sitting tends markedly to lessen his powers of comprehension either through the instrumentality of sight or sound. And for this reason alone, it is always wise to restrain one's judgment of the results until after a second sitting at least.

But to return to the advent of the “Imperator Group” in 1897. Under the control of this group of personalities, the communications assumed a dignity and loftiness of expression, as well as a quasi-religious character, which they had heretofore entirely lacked. Moreover, the passing in and out of the trance state which in the earlier stages had been attended with a certain amount of difficulty and discomfort, now, under the new conditions, became quiet and peaceful. Mrs. Piper, also, was less fatigued by the sittings, and her general health, already greatly benefited by the operations, continued to improve steadily.

Writing of the change, which at this time occurred, Dr. Hodgson says—“Most remarkable has been the change in Mrs. Piper herself in her general feeling of well being and her manner of passing into trance . . . She passes into trance calmly, easily, gently, and whereas there used to be frequently indications of distress and shrinking when she was losing consciousness, the reverse is now the case ; she seems rather to rejoice at her ‘departure’ and to be in the first instance depressed and disappointed when, after the trance is over, she comes to herself once more in this ‘black world’ of ours and realises her physical surroundings.” (Proc. Vol. LVII., p. 438).

Sir Oliver Lodge also was impressed with the changed conditions. “In the old days,” he says, “the tone was not so dignified and serious as it is now : it could in fact then be described as rather humorous and slangy ; but there was a serious

undercurrent constantly present even then; the welcomes and farewells were quaint and kindly—even affectionate at times—and nothing was ever said of a character that could give offence.” (Proc. Vol. LVIII., p. 133).

Certainly it is true that the tone in the old days was less serious and dignified than it is now, for there is a peculiarly impressive atmosphere about the communications of the “Imperator Group” which cannot be conveyed by words and must be experienced to be appreciated. Very little imagination is required when conversing quietly with the patient, kindly, and dignified personality known as “Rector,” to feel about one the grey, silent, and time-mellowed peace of some old-world cathedral sanctuary; or, indeed, to believe oneself far removed from the confines of this strife-ridden little world of ours.

In this connection I may state here that a fact which has aroused considerable interest during recent years among those familiar with Mrs. Piper's phenomena is her remarkable development as a spiritual adviser in her waking state. It is almost as if, since the trance state has been less and less resorted to, the cloak of Rector has fallen upon Mrs. Piper herself, and the good that she has been able to do along these lines, during the past nine or ten years, is almost unbelievable. I know of no record anywhere, in the ever-growing annals of psychical research, of anything even approaching the spiritual advice given by Rector as the amanuensis for the Imperator Group; and



In the earlier days, it was very largely the results of Dr. Hodgson's experiences with this Emperor Group and with G. P., that effected the complete reversion of his original almost belligerent attitude of scepticism in which he began his investigation of Mrs. Piper's psychic power, and which enabled him to state without equivocation, in his profound and illuminating report of 1898, that he felt no longer able to place himself on record as professing "to have any doubt but that the chief 'communicators,' to whom I have referred in the foregoing pages, are veritably the personalities that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us, whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism." (Proc. Vol. XIII., p. 40).

To me this report of Dr. Hodgson's has always appeared a masterpiece of analytical reasoning, and it puzzled me not a little that, in the course of my reading along these lines, I had never come across any reference to it; therefore, it is in the nature of an interesting coincidence that I record the following incident here.

On the afternoon of the day when, in my writing, I had referred to Dr. Hodgson's report (as above) I chose at random from my bookcase two books with which to while away a few hours on that warm spring day. The books which I had chosen turned out to be a volume of the S. P. R. Proceedings, and Mr. J. Arthur Hill's "Psychical Miscellanea." Glancing lazily through the early

pages of the Proceedings, my attention was suddenly rivetted on these words of Prof. James’— “I admire greatly Hodgson’s own discussion of the Piper-case in Volume XIII of our PROCEEDINGS, especially in sections 5 and 6 where, taking the whole mass of communications into careful account, he decides for this spiritist interpretation. I know of no more masterly handling anywhere of so unwieldy a mass of material.” That pleased me. And I remember my feeling of mild surprise that at last I had found my own feelings in this matter endorsed and by no less an authority than that of William James. But my “mild surprise” developed into acute astonishment, as well as gratification, when, later on, I came across this passage in the paper on “Evolution of a Researcher,” in Mr. Hill’s little book. “I cannot sufficiently express my admiration,” writes Mr. Hill, “which is as great as ever, for such masterly pieces of evidence as, for instance, Dr. Hodgson’s account of sittings with Mrs. Piper, in volume 13. If we were perfectly logical beings, without prejudice, that account ought to convince anybody ; certainly it ought to convince the reader of the operation of *something* supernormal, and it ought to go a long way towards excluding telepathic theories and rendering the spirit explanation the most reasonable one.”

It is truly a matter of the most profound regret that Dr. Hodgson did not, before his death in 1905, write that later report on Mrs. Piper’s phenomena which he had for some time con-

templated writing, and which he so much desired to write. For, however well his material may have been handled by those into whose hands it passed at his death, it is obvious that its compilers must needs have lacked the personal knowledge and understanding which Dr. Hodgson would have brought to bear, not only on its compilation, but on its interpretation as well.

## CHAPTER XIV

### PHENOMENA

PERHAPS at this point the reader, if unfamiliar with Mrs. Piper's phenomena, may find of interest a few examples representative of the different periods or stages. We will first consider one or two episodes taken from Sir Oliver Lodge's report on his sittings with Mrs. Piper during her first visit to England in 1889-90, and then pass on to reports of various sitters in America during the years 1888-1898. These incidents will illustrate the type of phenomena of the first and second periods of Mrs. Piper's psychic work; while examples of the work during the third and last period will be found in the *Latin Message* (Chaps. XIX-XX-XXI) and in Chap. XXVIII which contains an account of some experiences with Mrs. Piper in 1925-27.

At the time of Sir Oliver's—or Prof. Lodge's, as it was then—first sittings with Mrs. Piper in 1889, he had an elderly uncle, "Uncle Robert," who had lost a twin brother, "Jerry," some years previously. After interesting this Uncle Robert, "generally," as he says, Prof. Lodge asked him

for some relic of the deceased Uncle Jerry and by the morning post he received a watch which had formerly belonged to this uncle and of which he had been very fond.

That same morning, no one in the house having seen it or known anything about it, Prof. Lodge gave it to Mrs. Piper during the sitting. Almost immediately he was told that the watch belonged to an uncle who had been mentioned before as having died from the effects of a fall, an uncle who had been very fond of Uncle Robert, in whose possession the watch then was, and with whom the uncle was most anxious to communicate. "This is my watch," he was told, "and Robert is my brother and I am here. Uncle Jerry, my watch." "All this," writes Prof. Lodge, "at the first sitting on the very morning the watch had arrived by post, no one but myself and a shorthand clerk, who happened to have been introduced for the first time at the sitting by me, and whose antecedents are well known to me, being present."

Prof. Lodge then goes on to say that, "Having thus ostensibly got into communication through some means or other with what purported to be a deceased relative, whom I had indeed known slightly in his later years of blindness, but of whose early life I knew nothing, I pointed out to him that to make Uncle Robert aware of his presence it would be well to recall some trivial details of their boyhood, all of which I would faithfully report.

“He quite caught the idea and proceeded, during several successive sittings, ostensibly to instruct Dr. Phinuit to mention a number of little things such as would enable his brother to recognise him. References to his blindness, illness, and main facts of his life were comparatively useless from my point of view; but these details of boyhood, two-thirds of a century ago, were utterly and entirely out of my ken. My father was one of the younger members of the family, and only knew these brothers as men. ‘Uncle Jerry’ recalled episodes such as swimming the creek when they were boys together, and running some risk of getting drowned; killing a cat in Smith’s field; the possession of a small rifle, and of a long peculiar skin like a snake-skin which he thought was now in the possession of Uncle Robert.

“All these facts have been more or less completely verified. But the interesting thing is that his twin brother, from whom I got the watch, and with whom I was thus in a sort of communication, could not remember them all. He recollected something about swimming the creek, though he himself had merely looked on. He had a distinct recollection of having had the snake-skin, and of the box in which it was kept though he does not know where it is now. But he altogether denied killing the cat, and could not recall Smith’s field.

“His memory, however, is decidedly failing him, and he was good enough to write to another brother, Frank, living in Cornwall, an old sea

captain, and ask if he had any better remembrance of certain facts—of course, not giving any inexplicable reasons for asking. The result of this enquiry was triumphantly to vindicate the existence of Smith's field as a place near their own home, where they used to play, in Barking, Essex; and the killing of the cat by another brother was also recollected; while of the swimming of the creek, near a mill-race, full details were given, Frank and Jerry being the heroes of that foolhardy episode." It was in connection with this episode of "swimming the creek," "Smith's field," etc., that Sir Oliver, it will be remembered, sent the confidential agent to Barking in order to make inquiries and ascertain how much of what Phinuit recounted at the sittings might possibly have been acquired normally by Mrs. Piper. And it was this same agent who, in his report, stated that "Mrs. Piper has certainly beaten me," etc." (Chap. IX.)

Prof. Lodge then goes on to say, "I may say here that Dr. Phinuit has a keen "scent"—shall I call it?—for trinkets or personal valuables of all kinds. He recognised a ring which my wife wears as having been given 'to me for her' by a specified aunt just before her death . . . He called for a locket which my wife sometimes wears, but had not then on, which had belonged to her father forty years ago. He recognised my father's watch, asked for the chain belonging to it, and was still unsatisfied for want of some appendage which I could not think of at the

time, but which my wife later on reminded me of, and Phinuit, at another sitting, seized at a seal which had usually been worn with it, and which had belonged to my grandfather.

“ He pulled my sister’s watch out of her pocket and said it had been her mother’s, but disconnected the chain and said that didn’t belong, which was quite right. Even little pocket things, such as fruit-knives and corkscrews, he also assigned to their late owners; and once he quite unexpectedly gripped the arm of the chair Mrs. Piper was sitting in, which had never been mentioned to him in any way, and said that it had belonged to my Aunt Anne. It was quite true: it was an old-fashioned ordinary type of armchair which she valued and had had re-upholstered for us as a wedding present twelve years ago.”

This same series of sittings contains numerous accounts, recorded by Prof. Lodge, of Phinuit’s diagnoses of physical ailments with, in some instances, the prescriptions which he recommended and which, when tried, proved efficacious. In fact the whole régime of this quaint personality affords many incidents of this kind and it will be seen that the two which I will now quote, contain the element of prophecy as well.

In 1888 Mrs. Pitman, a member of the American branch of the S.P.R., had two sittings with Mrs. Piper, at one of which she was told that she was going to be very sick; that she would go to Paris—emphasis again being laid on the fact that she would be “very sick” while there—and that

her trouble would be great weakness of the stomach and head. She was further told that she would be attended in her illness by a sandy-complexioned gentleman. Mrs. Pitman denied that she had anything the matter with her stomach and contradicted Phinuit on every point which seemed to annoy him very much.

Finally, Mrs. Pitman asked what the outcome of the illness would be but to this Phinuit gave evasive replies; Mrs. Pitman then asked Dr. Hodgson's intervention and he, in turn, insisted that Phinuit should answer; but Phinuit got out of the difficulty by saying when she got over the illness she would be "all right." Not long after this sitting, Mrs. Pitman became very ill and was attended by a Dr. Hubert, a very fair man, who diagnosed her illness as inflammation of the stomach. Mrs. Pitman then began to feel that perhaps she had done Phinuit an injustice, although interpreting his last words wrongly, she thought she would recover. In Paris, where she went later, she was attended by Dr. Charcot for a serious illness during which she suffered much weakness in the head, her mental faculties becoming impaired, and shortly afterwards she died (Vol. XIII., p. 496).

The second incident (Vol. XIII., pp. 565-66-67) is taken from the series of sittings of Dr. and Mrs. Thaw, in New York, whose experiences with Mrs. Piper, to quote from a recent letter of Mrs. Thaw's to me, constituted—"A rushing river of important and evidential things." During

a sitting which Dr. and Mrs. Thaw shared, while Dr. Hodgson took notes in shorthand, Phinuit said suddenly "William says Will is coming to us." William was Dr. Thaw's father (deceased) and "Will" Dr. Thaw's brother, then thirty-seven years old who, from a boy, had suffered with eczema and asthma. At the time this sitting took place, this brother was in Florida and there was, as Mrs. Thaw says, no more reason to expect his death than at any time during several years past. In reply to Dr. Thaw's question, "How is Will going to pass out?" Phinuit answered—"He's going to sleep and when he wakes he'll be in the spirit. Kidneys out of order. He's out of order all over." Dr. Thaw then asked, "How soon?" and Phinuit replied, "He's coming within six months or a year," later on changing this to "six months or less." Two weeks later, the brother came to New York to consult a specialist who, after examining him, told Dr. Thaw that his heart and kidneys were affected; and when Dr. Thaw then asked how long he thought he would live, answered "about a year."

Four months from the time of the sitting Dr. Thaw received a cable from Germany, where his brother and family had been staying, announcing his brother's death; and months later, when the widow returned to America, she told Dr. Thaw in answer to his question—"How did Will die?"—that he "went to sleep in his chair and his heart stopped."

The next five incidents are taken from the artist, Roger Rich's, series of sittings in 1888-89. (Vol. VIII., pp. 127-131).

At one of his sittings, Mr. Rich produced a dog's collar which was immediately recognised by Phinuit as belonging to a collie dog that Mr. Rich had owned and which Phinuit described accurately. Phinuit then told Mr. Rich to call the dog as he used to do, and when Mr. Rich complied by whistling Phinuit said—"Here he comes! Oh, how he jumps! There he is now, jumping upon and around you! Rover! Rover! No—Grover! Grover! That's his name!" Mr. Rich remarks—"The dog was once called Rover but his name was changed to Grover in 1884, in honour of the election of Grover Cleveland."

At another time, Mr. Rich brought an article which had been placed in cotton wool in a box wrapped round with paper and tied with string. The contents of the box were unknown to Mr. Rich who had been given the box by a friend as a test. Handling the parcel, Phinuit described the friend who had sent it; described the person who had given the article it contained to the friend as from—"far off over the sea"; and then proceeded to describe certain characteristics of this person as well as his connection with Mr. Rich's friend. All these descriptions were afterwards verified as correct by the friend, and the article which Phinuit had described as "a charm" and "glittering," was proved to be a beautifully carved, but not "glittering," button latterly worn

as a charm with a gold attachment, which had formerly been in the possession of a noble Japanese family of great antiquity, and surreptitiously been taken from them by a visitor who had brought it to this country.

When Mr. Rich complained at a sitting that the remedies prescribed by Phinuit had not helped him, Phinuit said they had not been properly prepared. Mr. Rich denied this and assured Phinuit that every care had been taken in their preparation; Phinuit waxed emphatic and said that the coloured cook, to whom their preparation had been entrusted, had not followed the directions; had used the wrong proportions; had forgotten to watch them; and had made a mess of things generally. On enquiry, Mr. Rich says—“I found this to be the fact, for she (the cook) had understood me to say a quart instead of a pint, and confessed to having forgotten the mixture and allowed it to boil down but ‘thought it wouldn’t make any difference.’” At this same sitting, Mr. Rich presented a piece of embroidery made by a sailor while abroad on a cruise, and “at once ‘an old wizened-up man’ came to its influence.” Asked who he was, Phinuit replied, “Why, D.’s grandfather,” and gave the friend’s correct name although Mr. Rich had never known him by that name and had only learned it after a year’s acquaintance or more, the friend having followed the sea “as usual with sailors, under an assumed name.”

During his series of sittings, Mr. Rich was

frequently told by Phinuit that a child, "a blood relative a sister," was constantly with him and had much influence over him. Mr. Rich emphatically denied this as he had never had a sister and had never heard of one. His denial, however, did not affect Phinuit in the slightest, who only answered—"I know that *you* were never told of it. The birth was premature, the child dead, born some years before you were. Go and ask your aunts to prove it." Mr. Rich did this and thus records the results of his inquiries: "on questioning an aunt, who had always been a member of our family, I learned that such had been the case, and that by the time I came into the world the affair had been forgotten, and there had never been a reason for informing me of the circumstances, proving that I in no way had any intimation of it, and that this communication could not be explained by thought-transference or the like."

As illustrating the apparent power of "pertinent selection" on the part of the "controls," a factor which perhaps places the greatest difficulties in the path of the sceptic, the following incidents may be cited. (Vol. XIII., p. 378).

On the way out to a sitting at Arlington Heights, Dr. Hodgson read in the newspaper a notice of the death the day before of "F." At the sitting that day, the first communication came from "Mme. Elisa," a near relative of "F.'s," who explained that "F." was there with her but too weak to speak directly, and added that she

wanted to tell Dr. Hodgson how she helped "F." to reach her. She then said that she had been at "F.'s" bedside just before his death, and repeated a remark she had made to him—"an unusual form of expression"—declaring that "F." had heard and recognised her at the time. This statement of Mme. Elisa's was afterwards confirmed *in toto* in the only way possible. It appears that Dr. Hodgson showed an intimate friend of his and Mme. Elisa's, an account of this sitting, and a day or two later, the nearest surviving relative of "F.'s," without knowing anything about the incident at the sitting of course, told this friend that, when dying, "F." had suddenly said that he saw Mme. Elisa and that she was saying something to him which he then repeated aloud after her.

The expression which the relative now, in his turn, repeated, was identically that which Dr. Hodgson had been told by Mme. Elisa at his sitting with Mrs. Piper on the day after "F.'s" death, when the incident of the death-bed was unknown to him.

Then, there is the experience of Mrs. Blair Thaw's brother, Alexander Dow. Mr. Dow and his friend, George Perkins, had brought with them to a sitting the fraternity pin of another friend who had died that winter and of whom they had both been fond. Before this boy, Alfred Howell, appeared, two other boys came, one of whom immediately referred to a misunderstanding he and "George" had had, expressing a desire to

“make it up then.” But the point to be noticed is, that neither of these boys laid any claim to the pin. Then, Phinuit said another boy with dark hair, dark eyes, high forehead, and a small dark moustache, with a little colour in his cheeks, good-looking and smiling (an exact description of A. Howell), was there; and this boy at once recognised and claimed the pin as his.

The next few episodes are particularly difficult to explain on the basis of that bug-a-boo telepathy. (Vol. XIII.)

When a sitter, known as Mrs. W.L.P., asked the communicator, “Louis R.,” for the German nickname by which he used to call her husband she was given, not the name she had in mind, but another, “Up and Dust,” by which the communicator had occasionally called her husband because of the odd pronunciation he had once given to the German “Ich hab’ ein’ Wurst.”

Another sitter, Miss Vance, once asked G.P. for the name of a deceased college friend of her brother’s and was immediately given the name of “Harry Guild,” who had died in 1888, a college friend of her brother’s, certainly, but not the one she was thinking of at the time. G.P. correctly gave the name she wanted a little later after Miss Vance had explained that Harry Guild, although correct, was not the friend she had in mind.

At Dr. and Mrs. Thaw’s first sitting, an intimate friend of their’s, a “Dr. H.,” who had been dead about a year and a half, gave them a nickname by which he said he had been called. This name

was unknown to either Dr. or Mrs. Thaw, but later, upon enquiry, they were told by the widow that "it was the name commonly used by his mother and sisters, all dead, but not used by anyone living." Again, at a subsequent sitting, this same communicator, "Dr. H.", answered correctly a test question which Dr. and Mrs. Thaw asked on behalf of the widow and the answer to which was unknown to either of them.

Prof. Nichols of Harvard College, and his mother, once gave each other a ring for Christmas, and in each ring was engraved the first word of the giver's favourite proverb. Prof. Nichols had lost his ring, the one given him by his mother, many years before, but at his sitting with Mrs. Piper, a year after his mother's death, he had in his hand and "in mind only" the ring *he had given his mother*, which at her death had been taken off her hand and returned to him at her request. When Prof. Nichols asked what was written in his mother's ring, his mother, who purported to be writing at the time, "slapped down on the paper," not the word in the ring he was holding, but the word in the ring which his mother had given him and which he had lost years ago while travelling.

One morning, Dr. Hodgson's secretary, Miss Edmunds, was taking a sitting for a lady entirely unconnected with G.P., or his friends. During the sitting G.P. wrote a little and at the end, as Mrs. Piper was coming out of the trance, the voice said excitedly, "Tell Alec Bousser (pseudonym) not

to leave them alone." Now Alec Bousser was entirely unknown to Miss Edmunds but was well known to Dr. Hodgson. He had been an intimate friend of G.P. and was the husband of Mme. Frederica, the living sister of Mme. Elisa for whom G.P. frequently acted as amanuensis. Dr. Hodgson sent the message to Alec Bousser at once from whom he received the following reply :—"There certainly do happen to be some people I just was happening to be debating about in my own mind in a way that makes your short message perfectly significant and natural. I am sorry thus to be obliged to feed your credulity for I hate your spirits."

Another morning, G.P. sent this message to his father whom he was anxious to convince of his identity, by a Mr. Howard :—"I saw father and he took my photograph and took it to the artist's to have it *copied* for me. I went to Washington ; my father will be hard to convince, my mother not so hard." A few days later Mr. Pelham wrote to Mrs. Howard that "The letters which you have written to my wife, giving such extraordinary evidence of the intelligence exercised by George in some incomprehensible manner over the actions of his friends on earth, has given food for constant reflection and wonder. Preconceived notions about the future state have received a severe shock . . . My wife is writing."

In Mrs. Pelham's letter she wrote, "Some of the things you state are very inexplicable on any other theory than that George himself was the

speaker. His father *did*, without my knowledge, take a photograph of him (the same as the one sent you) to a photographer here to *copy*—or enlarge. The negative has been broken. Mrs. L. was going to have it copied in N.Y., and Mr. Pelham thought he would see what they could do here.”

When recovering from the trance one day, after a sitting, Mrs. Piper said, “I saw a bright light and a face in it, a gentleman with a beard on his face and he had a very high forehead, and he was writing.” Dr. Hodgson then said, “Would you know it again if you saw it?” “Oh, yes,” replied Mrs. Piper, “I would know it I think.” When fully awake she was shown a collection of thirty-two photographs, nine of which were men, and from these she selected, without hesitation, the one which she said resembled the man she had seen when coming out of the trance. She had picked out an excellent photograph of G.P. Later she picked out a second photograph, also of him.

Incidents such as these above might be multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. Indeed, one becomes bewildered and perplexed in trying to make selections from among the numbers. But those reproduced here may, as I said at the beginning of the chapter, be taken as fairly representative of Mrs. Piper's phenomena of the first and the beginning of the second period. In the chapter following this, I have included a few aphorisms also typical of the type of phenomena of the

108 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

second period. And in Chapter XXVIII I am able, through the kindness of Margaret Deland, the writer, to include two unusual experiences which occurred in her sittings with Mrs. Piper during 1925-26, thus bringing an account of the phenomena up-to-date.

## CHAPTER XV

### APHORISMS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

**B**E more passive, living in the faith that nothing of wrong can come to thee—that thy life is not one of disappointment and mistake, but live in the truth, believing that God is with thee and will look after thee; that He hath ordained thy life to be one of happiness and not of sorrow.

When thou hast become awakened to the beauties of thine own spirit, thou canst then go to thy friends' thoughts, through thought and prayer, and help awaken their spirits, and give greatly to those who have never seen a "light" or known themselves in any way other than that they were *simply mortal beings*.

Know and understand thyself in all things and become stout-hearted, brave, and noble; doing all things wisely and in the most straight-forward, honourable, and noble manner possible for mortal man or woman.

We would have thee read good books; go out for open fresh air; bathe in the sunlight of thine earthly world which God hath given thee to

enjoy. Look into Music, Art, and all things good and pure; listen to the very best that is within thee, and listen to the songs of the birds; study the flowers that are the light of your world; the highest thoughts of the best there is in thy life should predominate and grow and send forth from thee all that is good and holy.

Now, friend, sincerely believe and trust that the Supreme Being is thine earthly guide, and that if thou dost put thy trust in Him, He will lift thee out of all darkness. Do not make it an effort, but simply relax into a perfect state of calm and trust.

Now, to acquire this higher plane of spiritual development, it is not necessary that thou shouldst struggle and strain thyself up to a higher tension, so to speak, than thy spirit can endure; but it is necessary for thee to sincerely open the doors of the mortal and let the divine and holy spirit enter therein. To do this, worry not; think not of anything but that thou art a part of Him, and that that part should be thy guide; and *struggle* not for this, but become passive and calm and have perfect trust and faith in Him. Go thee forth, not in a state of anxiety and material care, but be ye uplifted and let thy spirit rest.

Listen! Make no haste in anything that thou wouldst do; be calm, considerate. Make thyself submit to this, that is, the feeling that hasty judgment be not of wisdom. Have charity for *all*. Speak not without knowledge of anything.

or anybody; in other words, judge not that ye be not judged.

If thou wilt only turn to the highest that is within thee, and live by it at all future time, thou wilt surely *have peace*.

Always think before thou dost give expression to thy thoughts; and say, "Oh God, thou seest me, I put myself as a child into thy hands, give me light, give me strength in all ways, spiritually, mentally, physically. Make me all that thou wouldst have me be.

In all spiritual things there is great love and so it always will remain.

Now, friend, we ask thee to rest in time for rest, and work when it is time for thee to work, and also pray; but let thy spirit drink as from the fountain of God all things good and pure—a peacefulness, a calmness, an earnestness in thy undertakings. And peace and happiness and a full and complete understanding of God's will and laws will then be thine.

Live in thy better self and believe in God's power to help and all will be well.

The spirit is of God, and the body of the earth, and whenever the spirit is found and understood, the earthly conditions can soon be mastered and brought under the absolute control of the spirit; and there will be perfect peace between mind and body and no thought of anything wrong or evil.

Say, "I see the best that is within me, and I

am fully aware of my own weaknesses but I desire to throw off all these conditions and live absolutely by the best." Then never waver from it.

There is really nothing for thee to worry over. What art thou, friend, anyway? Only a spiritual part of the Most High. Live in it then.

Live in the open air. Walk a little each day, friend, and listen to the music of earth, and look at the flowers of earth which are symbolic of all that is good and holy.

Constancy, calmness, confidence and so on through thy life. Feel that God is a part of thyself, and that thou art not the man that thou dost think thou art, alone the man, but that there is something nobler and higher than thyself. And when thou canst make thyself believe that God is of thyself a part, then from that moment thy life will begin anew and thou wilt see that thou art but the shadow of Him and He leadeth thee in the light.

Be charitable to all, and hold malice towards *none*. Be open-hearted, open-minded, true to thyself in all things.

Throw thy pride to the winds and have Charity.

Follow only the highest within thyself. Remember that thou canst not pass through the highest development without suffering some pain.

Be brave, noble, true to thyself and to God.

Live simply, humbly, peacefully with God and

mortals of earth in the belief that if thou has perfect faith, He will henceforth act for, ever guide, and carry thee over peaceful waters.

As thou dost progress out of the material to the higher spiritual growth, understanding will surely be thine.

Do not live in the past, but in the present and the future as much as possible.

Our lives in the material are for a holy purpose. They are not myths.

If thou wilt only live patiently and have full trust that it is not for thee to suffer, but that there is much for thee which is thine by actual claim on the Most High, it will be given thee.

When the spirit is shut in and man alone acting, he cannot do anything ; but when he doth allow his spirit to possess him and doth let it shine forth out of the imprisoning body, then all will seem changed to him. Let this guide thee ever.

There is really no separation between the life there and here, and your interests are always ours, every day you live ; and in everything you really wish we are with you in the thought.

If it was not for the spirit there would be no understanding in the body, and the body would really be nothing. The life in the mortal is only a beginning of the life in the spiritual, but the body is a discomfort to the spirit if too much thought is centered upon it, and that must not be.

114 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

Friend, call upon the Supreme to help and give knowledge and knowledge will be given. Simply say, "I have striven and I seem to fail. I believe in thee and thy power to help; I come to thee for help," and thou wilt find it at once, friend. And there is no such thing as His failing thee.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE DEATH OF DR. HODGSON (1905)

THE years following Mrs. Piper's return from England in 1890 were, as I have said, years of growth and development, as well as very happy years for us all. My mother's health was better during this time than it had been for many years and her phenomena showed a corresponding improvement and development. As for my sister and myself (both splendidly healthy creatures, thanks to our mother's sane and careful bringing up of two naturally sensitive and highly strung temperaments) we found the time occupied as it was in winter with our music and school, and in summer with the joys and interests of the long holidays *en famille*—slipping away into years with almost incredible rapidity. And so Time passed! But there is a saying, I believe, to the effect that the pendulum swings both ways!

The first event to bring this truth home to us and at the same time to shatter the even routine of the past fourteen years, was the death in June 1904, of my father. Even though for

## 116 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

some time previously he had been an invalid, his passing left a gap in the lives and hearts of us all which has never disappeared.

The second event which was responsible for many changes thereafter in the hitherto even tenor of our lives, was the death in 1905, the year following the death of my father, of Dr. Hodgson, who while playing a game of handball at the Union Boat Club, on the afternoon of December 20, dropped dead of heart failure.

Dr. Hodgson's death was indeed a terrible shock to us all but, naturally, more especially to my mother. Our first intimation of the tragedy was on the morning after its occurrence and reached us through the medium of the daily newspaper which in the manner of these things, blatantly announced on its front page the death of Richard Hodgson, LL.D., the famous psychical researcher, or words to that effect. The severity of the shock was all the more severe as only two days before this Dr. Hodgson, to all intents and purposes in his usual excellent health, had taken a sitting on behalf of a sitter (who for some reason had not been able to be present in person) and for nearly an hour on this occasion had discussed with me in his brusque though kindly way, certain changes in the arrangements and conditions of the work which for my mother's sake, I was anxious should be made.

And now he was gone! It seemed incredible. The magician who when we were little had before our astonished eyes turned our common-

## The Death of Dr. Hodgson (1905) 117

place everyday marbles into wonderful Australian nuts some of which we still have! That wise counsellor who had first made us acquainted with the delights of "Water Babies," "Back of the North Wind," and all the bewildering array of Lang's Fairy Books! Or, again, the Ogre who on that memorable morning of my childhood when our newly acquired donkey "Billy" having arrived without previous warning and I, in a dilemma as to what course to pursue but feeling the occasion was one that demanded instant and drastic action of some kind, had flown upstairs and, knocking timidly on the door of the sanctum sanctorum where even then a sitting was in progress, had inquired in a wee and quavery voice of the astonished and outraged man who opened the door what I should "do with the donkey"—the Ogre who having out of sheer amazement listened to my agitated question, grimly shut the door again and in a voice which made me quake in my shoes bade me "run downstairs and not bother me about donkeys!" But most outstanding of all, that staunch true friend, who ever in times of trouble, or distress, stood ready in the unobtrusive way that was his, to help in any and every possible way the needy or afflicted.

No, it seemed impossible to realise that Dr. Hodgson was gone! And yet staring at me from the front page of that newspaper to which my grandfather had called my attention, was the cold definite announcement to that effect. My mother had not yet seen the paper—she usually

breakfasted in bed—how should I break the news to her most gently? And pondering this, I bethought me of the dream the night before which she had told me only that morning on my way downstairs, and decided to use that as my opening wedge. It seems that in the early part of the previous night my mother had been very restless and unable to sleep and—but we will let her tell her dream in her own words as a friend, who called later in the day to sympathise, transcribed it, at my mother's request, in shorthand.

“I retired,” she says, “at half-past nine last evening and after a most uncomfortable, restless night, at twenty minutes before twelve I went to the dining-room to get a warm drink thinking that might induce sleep. I returned to bed and lay awake until one thinking and feeling that there was someone present, walking about my room; and it disturbed me so that I had the impulse to get up and light the lamp to see if there *was* anyone present. I did not do this, however, owing to my being so weary. After the clock struck one, I fell asleep and was awakened suddenly at four o'clock having dreamed of trying to enter a tunnel which looked dark as I looked into it. As I looked toward this tunnel and approached the entrance, I saw a man with a beard, wearing a slouch hat, but did not recognise the face. As I stepped forward to enter, the man raised his hand as a warning to prevent my entering and as the hand was extended it

## The Death of Dr. Hodgson (1905) 119

woke me and I sprang up and went to the window only to find the rain beating in. I closed the window and returned to bed after which I slept about two hours. At half-past seven my daughters came into my room and I told them about it. It impressed me as being so out of the ordinary that, in talking it over with them, I remarked that the hand strongly resembled Dr. Hodgson's. In fact, I told Alta that the hand was more like Dr. Hodgson's than anything I had seen. At half-past eight Alta came into my room again with a copy of the morning paper in which the sudden death of Dr. Hodgson was announced."

Among the packet of Dr. Hodgson's letters to an English friend which I was permitted to read this winter, and from which I have quoted several extracts in the following chapter, was one dated Feb. 20, 1905, in which I read this statement: "'G.P.' has dropped a hint that this may be the last season with Mrs. Piper but I don't know what is going to happen." Did the "personalities" know of Dr. Hodgson's approaching death, I wonder? or was it one of those tragedies which those on "the other side" assure us *do* occasionally occur, when individuals are stricken down and cut off from their work before the intended time? I do not know. But, certainly, if "G.P.'s" remark or "hint" *was* intended as an intimation of Dr. Hodgson's passing, Dr. Hodgson himself—even as in the case of Mrs. Pitman (Chap. XIII)—misconstrued it, for he interpreted

it as referring in some way to Mrs. Piper! Perhaps warnings such as these are purposely veiled. Who knows? It is all, still, such a maze in which we find ourselves hopelessly lost if we are not extremely careful. At any rate, the passing of this upright, fearless soul from our midst was an indescribable loss and sorrow to all who were privileged to know him.

## CHAPTER XVII

### RICHARD HODGSON—THE MAN

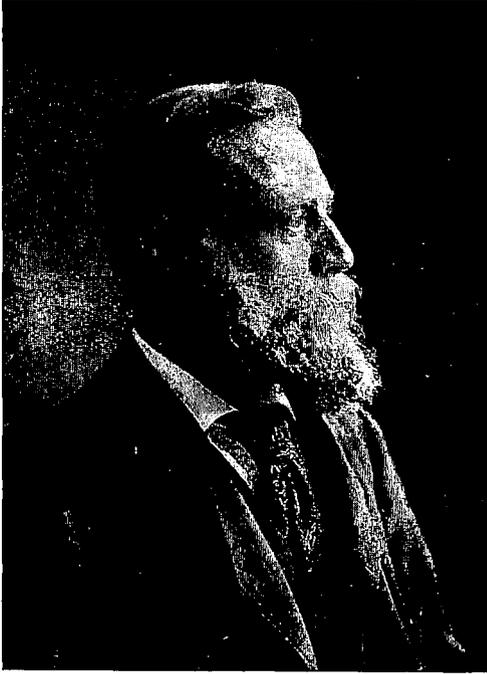
IT is amazing to see how little, even to the more profound students of psychical research, is known of Dr. Hodgson's life. While his work is known and appreciated by all, practically nothing of his individuality or personal life seems to have percolated beyond that relatively small circle of intimate friends and confrères with whom, in his lifetime, he surrounded himself. Possibly this is all the more surprising to those who knew him well for, as Dr. Walter Prince recently said to my mother—"If ever there was a hero, Dr. Hodgson was one."

Living alone in one room in Boston, with no private means of his own, dependent even for his bread and butter on a wholly inadequate and voluntarily contributed salary, he nevertheless refused several remunerative offers from various colleges and universities in order that he might be free, as he saw it, to devote all his time and energy to the subject which he felt to be of vital interest and importance to mankind. A member of the Tavern Club of Boston, he there surrounded

himself with a select coterie of the finest literary and scholastic brains of his day. And there, also, he found in strenuous exercise—squash rackets, hand ball, and fives—the necessary antidote to the fatiguing, mental work with which nine-tenths of his day was filled. Dr. Hodgson was also an enthusiastic swimmer and enjoyed, more than anything else, going for an hour's sail down Boston harbour to Nantasket Beach where exceptional facilities were afforded the swimmer.

Even now, I can visualize him so plainly as in the first warm spring days, the sitting over, he dashed from the house, brown ulster coat tails flying, and bag straps streaming in the wind, rushing for the last train that would enable him to make connections for Nantasket. And, incidentally, so well-known a figure had he become to the railway officials between Boston and Arlington Heights that I have known, more than once, the train to be stopped after it had started, when Dr. Hodgson's hurrying figure was seen at the top of the station steps. After his death, a conductor on one of these same trains remarked to my father, one day, that it did not seem right to start his train without Dr. Hodgson being there.

Brusque, quick, and bluntly outspoken, there was yet something so likeable about Richard Hodgson's whole personality that his friends esteemed him greatly. Young and old loved him, and by children he was particularly adored. Knowing full well what it meant to struggle along without always knowing where the next



RICHARD HODGSON, LL.D.

day's bread was coming from, he never failed, whenever it was possible, to help someone else. One day, when my mother mentioned having seen a poem of his in a current magazine, his great laugh rang out as he replied simply: "Yes, I got fifteen dollars for that, just enough to pay W.'s milk bill which had got badly in arrears!" That was all that mattered to this big-hearted man.

As I have said, children adored Dr. Hodgson and well they might, for not only could and did he amuse them by the hour with clever and bewildering conjuring tricks, but he also composed to order the most absurd stories and rhymes for their benefit. Little Popsey-Wopsey, inspired by "Beatrice" the little daughter of Dr and Mrs. Thaw, is an example of these.

"Little Popsey-Wopsey,  
Chicka-biddy-chum,  
She shall have some  
Piesey-wisey and  
A sugar plum.

She shall ridey-piedy  
In a coachy-woachy, too,  
All around the  
Parky-warky with  
A cock-a-doodle-doo."

But it was not only for his ability to amuse them that children so loved Dr. Hodgson. Instinctively they realised that he was their friend in sorrow as well as in joy. I will give one little personal incident of what I mean. I was

about eight years old at the time, and we were visiting Dr. and Mrs. Thaw in New York. Very recently, I had begun to study the violin and this was my first experience away from my teacher. One afternoon when I made quite sure, as I thought, that everyone, except the nurse and little Beatrice Thaw who were upstairs in the nursery, had gone out, I got my fiddle out of its case and began with some trepidation to tune it. But I did not get far. Even to my untutored ear the sounds that followed the drawing of the bow across the strings were pretty awful, and all my struggles seemed only to make bad matters worse. Finally, reduced to tears, I looked up to see Dr. Hodgson standing on the threshold holding out his hand for my wretched instrument. Writing in the room below, he had heard the dreadful noises coming from above and suspecting the probable results, had come upstairs to put things right. The contrary pegs soon yielded to his understanding skill and then, tucking the fiddle under his chin, he entertained both himself and me for half an hour, or more, with old college airs and songs.

I think very few of Dr. Hodgson's friends and acquaintances know, even to this day, that he could play the violin very well, or that he was passionately fond of music. Neither was it generally recognised, I think, what a deeply religious, poetical nature lay hidden under that bluff, jovial exterior, and which more and more during the last years of his life came to the fore,

developed, he always said, "by the fine, beautiful precepts and counsels of Emperor."

Recently, an old and dear friend of Dr. Hodgson's, allowed me to read some of his letters to her which she had carefully preserved. With her permission I have chosen a few passages from these letters for insertion here which, I think, portray very clearly not only the man's indubitable belief in God but his innate sense of justice as well. In one letter he writes, in part: "It adds a great deal to life, of course, to be assured of the nearness and help of particular discarnate spirits, but apart from this there is no necessity *for anyone who believes in God*—for doubting the absolute persistence of the moral order throughout the whole of his existence." And again, "And what I meant when I said that you '*must* be all right in God's universe' was not Christian Science! But it was meant to be a good banging, cudgelling blow—a real scolding jeer! The trouble is that nobody believes in God enough. Don't you see that if you really believe fully in God's infinite love you must feel all right no matter what happens? The only alternative is to suppose that God is a feeble old thing that would like to take care of us but can't. Now *do* you or don't you believe in God!" Then the simple but forceful admonition, "Don't forget to pray much and to trust in God 'The Father, Infinitely Fatherly.'" And again this extract showing the man's fine sense of justice—"About your own lodging matter," he writes, "that's a question for

your own conscience. How can *I* tell you? Your agreement with your friend may involve your carrying it out even at cost of some inconvenience, etc., to yourself, and on the other hand, of course, there are limits. I *suspect* that if your friend did as well as she could you are not justified in leaving. So far as I can see it comes to a question of square dealing, about which *men* are much more particular, as a *rule*, than women. She may have suggested to you to leave, feeling that you wanted to, but she may feel aggrieved all the same and think you have behaved badly. If you *have* left, and if you think she does feel this way, you'd better make a clean breast to her and get peace!"

Each year, at Christmas, Dr. Hodgson adopted the rather unusual and quite characteristic custom of having printed as his personal Christmas card for his friends and acquaintances, some poem, or verses, of which he was particularly fond. He was a great reader and especially fond of poetry with a vivid and deep appreciation of its inner or esoteric meaning. Considering this fact, it is certainly interesting that he should have chosen for his Christmas greeting in 1905 the following selection from Tennyson the first verse of which epitomizes Dr. Hodgson's personal code of life; while the second, in view of his death the following year, becomes strangely prophetic.

"Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-men,  
And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy king,  
And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,

And send the day into the darkened heart ;  
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,  
A dying echo from a falling wall.

And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,  
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou  
Look higher, then—perchance thou mayest—Beyond  
A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,  
And past the range of Night and Shadow—see  
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day  
Strike on the Mount of Vision !”

Much, very much more could be written of this fine, true personality and perhaps some day this will be done ; but here, briefly of necessity, I have given just those high lights which I hope will, even if only in some small degree, help those to whom the man is but a name, to understand better the loss sustained by psychical research and by his friends in the passing of Richard Hodgson.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ENGLAND AGAIN

WHEN we consider that for the eighteen years prior to Dr. Hodgson's sudden death, Mrs. Piper's work had been under his sole and complete charge, it is not surprising that its even tenor and continuity should have been temporarily interrupted by the passing of this courageous soul. With the beginning of the new year, however, a member of the American branch of the Society, Mr. B—, having obtained Prof. James' sanction, persuaded Mrs. Piper to resume the sittings under his management, an arrangement which continued in effect until the following June when Mrs. Piper received a letter from Lady Lodge, written at Sir Oliver Lodge's instigation, suggesting on behalf of the S.P.R., that she once again visit England for the purpose of investigation.

This letter followed closely the return to England of Mr. J. G. Piddington, an English member of the Society who, while in Boston in the early Spring, had had several sittings with Mrs. Piper. It came, moreover, at a critical time in our domestic arrangements. The big house at

Arlington Heights after the death of my father and grandmother, was much too large for our needs and altogether too great a responsibility for my mother with her psychological work, so that at the time Lady Lodge's letter arrived, we were facing the problem of unwisely continuing as we were, or of seeking a smaller and less pretentious home nearer town. But custom is a powerfully actuating motive and our affections had so sturdily twined themselves about the old home and its associations, that I doubt if we should not unwisely have remained on at the Heights, had not Lady Lodge's letter arrived just as it did.

This decided us, however, as a temporary break at least would be necessitated by my mother's acceptance of the Society's invitation; and so, the necessary arrangements having been completed by early autumn, we once more sailed for England.

The crossing, this time, was uneventful. Upon our arrival at Liverpool, we were met by Mr. Edwin Thompson, the son—now grown to manhood—of Mr. Isaac Thompson who, with Sir Oliver Lodge, had seen my mother off for America at the termination of her previous visit to England, and of whose death she now learned with genuine regret. Mr. Thompson conducted us direct to his mother's, Mrs. Thompson's, with whom we spent the first few days of our arrival. One little incident of that drive from Princess Pier to Waverly Road, although not in any way bearing upon the object of our visit, yet made a great impression on my

mind, unused as I was at that time to English ways and customs. We were in a "growler," piled high with American luggage, and we had gone only a little more than half-way when I noticed a man, running doggedly behind our cab. After watching him for a moment, I asked Mr. Thompson in surprise, "What is that man doing who seems to be following us?" "He *is* following us," was the answer, "and he will probably continue to follow us all the way in the hope that he can earn a few coppers by helping with the luggage." The sight of this poor fellow running that distance, hoping to pick up a few pennies, appalled me, and I was thankful when I saw my mother slip a small extra *pourbois* into his hand.

During that first week in Liverpool, my mother, although suffering from a very heavy cold which she had contracted on the voyage, yet gave several noteworthy sittings to various members of Mrs. Thompson's family as well as to Sir Oliver Lodge. Sir Oliver had come on from Birmingham to arrange for our going to "Mariemont" the following week although, as a matter of fact, our departure was slightly delayed owing to my mother's very severe cold. Eventually, we bade farewell to our kindly hostess, however, and at the end of a surprisingly short journey through fascinating English country, arrived at Edgbaston where we entered forthwith upon a new and delightful experience for us all.

At this time, all twelve of the Lodge children were at home, six boys and six girls. An amusing anecdote is still told of Sir Oliver Lodge in con-

nection with the birth of the first little girl after Lady Lodge had presented him with five sturdy sons. In addition to the announcement of "Violet's" birth, etc., Sir Oliver had added this comment—"Thank God! a girl at last!"

No small feat of memory was required to learn by heart the names of this big family; but we mastered them at last and, thereafter, took great pleasure in reciting them in sequence as rapidly as possible, Oliver, Brodie, Alec, Lionel, Noel, Violet, Raymond, Honor, Norah, and the twins Barbara and Rosalynde—so the sequence ran! And after reading these, it will scarcely appear surprising that Whitelaw Reid, at that time the American Ambassador to England, hearing my sister "Minerva" addressed by name one night at dinner, and mistaking her for one of Sir Oliver Lodge's daughters, should have remarked to his host with a smile: "I see, Sir Oliver, that you have had to draw on mythology for some of your children's names!"

It is impossible for me to describe, with any degree of justice, this big, happy family of boys and girls, all living in perfect harmony and devoted to one another; or the happy, jolly times we had with them during that three weeks' visit at "Mariemont." That first visit passed with incredible swiftness. My mother's work went splendidly while, for my sister and myself, each day was fraught with pleasure. First, there was "Violet's" coming-out party, held at the Assembly Rooms, which created much excitement among us

all. Then the mad, delightful hockey games at the week ends which were played on the big field adjoining the tennis court, and one amusing incident of which still causes me to smile when I recall it. One particularly well-fought game had waxed long and hard and the evening shadows were fast closing in around us. Only one goal had so far been won and that by "our side"; but the other side were struggling valiantly and gamely to make the score a tie. Suddenly "Noel," with a well-directed shot, sent the ball bounding down the field straight as a die for the goal. "Yuki" (Baron Inouye, the Japanese ambassador to Berlin's little daughter who at that time was staying with the Lodges for the purpose of learning English) was goal keeper at the time and so quickly and unexpectedly was the ball upon her that, in a panic of apprehension and shrieking with excitement she spread her skirts with both hands and dropped like a plummet on the bounding ball within an inch of the line. And there, amid shouts of laughter from us all, she sat tight!

Then, besides the outdoor games, there were the amusing charades acted in the big library during the long evenings; or the cosy after-dinner gatherings when Sir Oliver would read to us until, punctually at ten o'clock, "Harrison" appeared with a huge tray of glasses, two tall jugs of steaming hot milk, and cake for all. After this the "good-nights" were said, and off we went to bed.

On these occasions when Sir Oliver read aloud,

he demanded perfect quiet from his listeners and even a slight noise troubled him. One night, during the reading of Shaw's "Major Barbara," Lady Lodge, busying herself with some form of needlework as was her custom at these times, was startled, as were we all, when Sir Oliver, suddenly putting down his book and rubbing his broad forehead agitatedly as was his wont when perturbed, inquired in a very gruff voice indeed, "What *is* that noise going on?" After a moment's silence, Lady Lodge raised her bit of sewing for his inspection, and smiling sweetly answered gently, "It's the twin's hat, Ollie, dear." A burst of laughter greeting this announcement, Sir Oliver smiled in spite of himself, and picking up his book resumed his interrupted reading—this time in silence!

Is it any wonder, then, that at the end of those three weeks we found London, where we went direct from "Mariemont," even drearier, foggier, dirtier, and more thoroughly cheerless than is its wont even in chill December! A wave of homesickness nearly overcame us all, and never shall I forget the night when Sir Oliver, having sensed our feelings from our letters—although we had been most careful in what we wrote in our desire not to "upset" things—unexpectedly appeared at our hotel prepared to take us back with him the following day. Perhaps it was the realisation that our growing sense of martyrdom could, at a word, be thus assuaged, which gave us the courage to remain on in London according to the original

plan. At any rate, we bravely permitted Sir Oliver to return to "Mariemont" the next day, alone. Looking back upon our feelings during those first few weeks in London, they appear dreamlike and unreal, for long before the winter was over we had learned to love not only every fog, but even the grey days and "ubiquitous mud" of Prof. James' as well, so deeply attached to England did we become.

And it was during this time—the winter of 1906 and '07—that the now famous "cross-correspondences" took place which, in a way, introduced an entirely new phase of psychical research. No record of Mrs. Piper's work would be in any way complete without an example of this type of investigation, and I have chosen for inclusion in these pages that cross-correspondence known as the Latin Message, although anyone interested in this line of experimentation should most certainly read the "Lethe" cross-correspondence which may be found in Vol. XXIV. of the S.P.R. Proceedings.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LATIN MESSAGE

**I**N this experiment of the Latin Message cross-correspondence, three automatists took part; Mrs. Piper in London, Mrs. Verrall and Miss Verrall in Cambridge. The origin and purpose of this experiment is clearly and concisely set forth in the following excerpt from Miss Alice Johnson's interesting discussion on cross-correspondences, in the S.P.R. Proc. Vol. XXVII.

“About a month after the cross-correspondence just described had occurred, viz. in April 1906, the theory that cross-correspondences were expressly designed to provide evidence for something transcending telepathy between the minds of the automatists was first definitely formulated. . . . In the autumn of the same year Mr. Piddington and I, in view of the sittings with Mrs. Piper which were about to be held in London, devised the experiment of a ‘Latin Message’ to be addressed to Myers in Latin. The original version of the message was as follows :

## 136 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

We are aware of the scheme of cross-correspondences which you are transmitting through various mediums, and we hope that you will go on with them.

Try *also* to give to A and B two different messages, between which no connection is discernible. Then as soon as possible give to C a third message which will reveal the hidden connection.

“It appeared to us that if the experiment succeeded and cross-correspondences of the desired type occurred, they would afford almost conclusive evidence of the agency of a mind external to those of all the automatists, and might afford strong evidence of the identity of this mind.”

This, then, was the inception and purpose of the Latin Message experiment and should be kept in mind throughout the following resumé.

The English version of the message was translated into Ciceronian Latin by Mrs. Verrall's husband, Dr. A. W. Verrall, the distinguished classical scholar, his translation being by no means easy even with the help of a dictionary, to re-translate into English by anyone not thoroughly conversant with Latin. For the sake of clearness, Dr. Verrall's translation with its literal re-translation into English, as given by Mr. Piddington in the Proceedings, is here appended.

- (a) *Diversis internuntiis quod invicem inter se respondentia jamdudum committis, id nec fallit nos consilium, et vehementer probamus.*

*Unum accesserit gratissimum nobis, si, cum*

duobus quibusdam ea tradideris, inter quae nullus appareat nexus, postea quam primum rem per tertium aliquem ita perficias, ut latens illud in prioribus explicetur.

- (b) As to the fact that (quod) for some long time past you have been entrusting (committis) to different intermediaries (or, messengers) things which correspond mutually between themselves, we have observed your design, and we cordially approve it.

One thing besides this most agreeable to us will have happened [*i.e.* You will even add to our pleasure] if, when you shall have delivered to two particular persons things between which no connexion is apparent, afterwards as soon as possible through some third person you so complete the matter (or business) that that which was latent in the first two (messages) may be revealed.

At this point, the question may arise as to the knowledge of the various automatists concerning the nature of this experiment and the fact that it was to be undertaken at all. Again I quote Miss Johnson :

- “(a) Mrs. Verrall was fully acquainted with it.  
(b) Miss Verrall must be assumed to know something about it, since she was present at the sitting of December 19, 1906, when part of the message was dictated to Mrs. Piper in trance.  
(c) To Mrs. Piper the subject was mentioned only while she was in trance, and the message was dictated in Latin to the trance-personalities.”

With reference to another important aspect of this experiment, that is, what effect the knowledge, or lack of knowledge, on the part of the different automatists, had on the value of this cross-correspondence, Miss Johnson writes as follows: "The knowledge or ignorance of the automatists about the Latin Message had of course no bearing on the evidential value of the cross-correspondences, but it might have had some effect on the wording of the scripts."

To do the Latin Message experiment full justice would require a book by itself, but for the purposes of the present work, I shall try to give as condensed a summary of those points generally conceded to be of greatest interest, as is consistent with clearness and lucidity. All of those who are interested to pursue this subject further, will find valuable material in Mr. J. G. Piddington's skilfully handled and detailed report (Proc. Vol. XXII.), and in Miss Johnson's interesting paper (Proc. Vol. XXVII).

## CHAPTER XX

### THE LATIN MESSAGE CONT. (I.)

IN order that the incidents in this experiment, with which we shall herein concern ourselves, may be quite clear, we shall begin our analysis of them with a chronological summary first, however, explaining that the letters "U.D.," are used by Rector and Myers <sub>P.</sub> as abbreviations for all parts of the verb "to understand," as well as for the noun "understanding," and that the communications purporting to come from Mr. Myers through Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Verrall and Miss Verrall, respectively, are designated thus:—Myers <sub>P.</sub>, Myers <sub>V.</sub>, and Myers <sub>H.V.</sub>

This experiment began in London on the morning of Dec. 17, 1906, and extended over a period of five months and a half, or until June 2, 1907. At the first sitting Mr. Piddington gave to Rector, who acted as amanuensis for Myers <sub>P.</sub>, the first nine words of the Latin Message pronouncing each word syllable by syllable and spelling it letter by letter, a method which he continued to use throughout the entire transmission of the Latin. Also, at this same sitting,

Mr. Piddington carefully explained to Rector, in the following words, the importance which he attached to this message :—

“I attach great importance to this message and to its being correctly transmitted. One object in sending this message in Latin is to see whether Myers can understand it. To show that he must send an *intelligent* reply to it ; not merely such a reply as ‘I understand,’ or ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’ but a reply which will show that he has grasped the purport of it.”

On the morning of the 17th, as Mr. Piddington gave the last word “committis,” he noted that the clock struck twelve. At this precise moment, it so happened, Mrs. Verrall in Cambridge, started to write the following script :

“Revolving axes

Revolving spheres the mystic music make

Revolving spheres the harmony began

Harmonious sound scarce audible to man

Then from every several unit of the whole

Joined the majestic music of the Soul

no ! no !

Majestic music

No—you dont see what I want—begin again.

Relvolving spheres the harmony began—

A diapason manifest to man—

Each single unit played its several part

Discoursing symphony with godsent art

Till the majestic music of the whole

Throbbled in pulsation :—and the throbbing Soul

Saw through the sound the burning of the flame

Felt the lost Presence—to the Presence came.”

## The Latin Message Continued (I) 141

It is interesting to note that in Mr. Piddington's view the lines

“ Each single unit played its several part,  
Discoursing symphony with godsent art,  
Till the majestic music of the whole  
Throbbled in pulsation :—and the throbbing Soul  
Saw through the sound the burning of the flame,”

foreshadow the poem “ Abt Vogler,” the foundation upon which this cross-correspondence rests ; and he draws especial attention to the phrase,

“ and the throbbing Soul  
Saw through the sound the burning of the flame,”

as reflecting the following line from this poem :—

“That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound but a star.”

This suggestion of Mr. Piddington's is of interest because, as we shall see, the idea of *star* became later an important element in this complex cross-correspondence.

On December 19, at which sitting Miss Verrall was present, Mr. Piddington gave Rector five words more of the Latin Message, and on the 24th thirteen more ; after which, on the 31st, he carried the message through the word “rem” in the second paragraph. At this last sitting Rector remarked :—“ We have in part U.D. and conveyed your message to your friend Myers and he is delighted to receive it so far as he has been able to receive it.”

At the next sitting on January 2, 1907, Rector wrote that—“ Hodgson is helping Myers with his translation ”—a remark that becomes interesting

when considered in connection with subsequent developments. Later at this same sitting, Myers<sub>p.</sub> told Mr. Piddington that the message had impressed him very much and that he would gladly translate it into English for him, whereupon Mr. Piddington explained that he did not wish him necessarily to *translate* the message but to reply to it in such a way that his answer would prove he had understood the purport of the message. And to this Myers<sub>p.</sub> replied—"I quite understand and I will certainly do so"; after which Mr. Piddington, in accordance with his request, gave him the remainder of the Latin.

On January 16, it was suggested to Myers<sub>p.</sub> by Mr. Piddington that when giving a cross-correspondence it might be well to affix to the script of each automatist some symbol—such as a triangle within a circle—in order more clearly to establish a connection, where connection was intended, between the scripts. This suggestion seemed to please Myers<sub>p.</sub> who said he should "be very glad to try this." Mr. Piddington, also at this same sitting, tried again to impress upon Myers<sub>p.</sub> the importance which the experimenters attached to cross-corresponding messages.

On January 23, Myers<sub>p.</sub> said, "I should like to go over the first and second sentences of our Latin Message . . . I believe I can send you a message which will please you if I understand it clearly." On the night of this same day Mrs. Verrall wrote the following script.

## The Latin Message Continued (I) 143

SCRIPT OF JANUARY 23, 1907.

### Justice hold the scales

That gives the words but an anagram would be better. Tell him that—rats star tars and so on. Try this. It has been tried before RTATS re-arrange these five letters or again tears

stare

seam

same

and so on.

Skeat takes Kate's Keats stake steak.

But the letters you should give to-night are not so many—only three—a s t

No further reference to the Latin Message was made by Myers until February 11; meanwhile, on January 28, and February 3rd, the following scripts had been written by Mrs. and Miss Verrall respectively.

SCRIPT OF JANUARY 28, BY MRS. VERRALL.

Aster [a star]

*τερας* [a sign or wonder]

The world's wonder

And all a wonder and a wild desire—

The very wings of her.

A WINGED DESIRE

*ὑπόπτερος ἔρως* [winged love]

Then there is Blake

And mocked my loss of liberty.

But it is all the same thing—the winged desire

*ἔρως ποθεινός* [passion] the hope that leaves

the earth for the sky—Abt Vogler for earth

too hard that found itself or lost itself—in the sky.

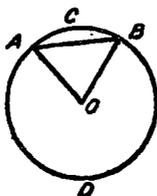
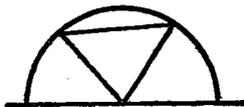
That is what I want

On the earth the broken sounds

threads

144 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

In the sky the perfect arc  
 The C major of this life  
 But your recollection is at fault



A D B is the part that unseen completes  
 the arc.

PART OF MISS VERRALL'S SCRIPT OF FEBRUARY 3.  
 a green jerkin and hose and doublet where the  
 song birds pipe their tune in the early morning.  
 therapeutikos ek exotikon [a healer from aliens]



a monogram

The crescent moon

remember that



and the star

like a thunder riven oak the grim remains  
 stand on the level desolation of the plains  
 a record for all ages of the span  
 which nature gives to the weak labour of a man

The Latin Message Continued (I) 145



bird

On February 11, Myers <sub>P.</sub> told Mr. Piddington that he had referred to Hope, Star, Browning in Mrs. Verrall's script.

On February 17, Miss Verrall wrote a script which is given below.

MISS VERRALL'S SCRIPT OF FEBRUARY 17.

androsace (?) Carthusian candelabrum



many together



that was the sign she will <sup>see</sup>

understand when she sees it.

diapason *δια πασων ρυθμος* [rhythm through all]

no arts avail

the heavenly harmony *ως εφη οπλατων* [sic]

[as Plato says]

the mystic three (?)



and a star above it all

rats everywhere in Hamelin town

now do you understand Henry

K

146 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

On February 27, Myers <sub>P.</sub> told Mr. Piddington that "Hope Star Browning" was his answer to the Latin Message.

On March 6, Myers <sub>P.</sub> referred to having given Mrs. Verrall a circle and triangle and mentioned "Hope Star Browning" in connection with them.

On March 13, Myers <sub>P.</sub> again referred to the circle, which he had given Mrs. Verrall as being, in his mind connected with these three words, "Hope Star Browning."

On March 20, Myers <sub>P.</sub> referred again to having given Mrs. Verrall "Browning Hope Star" and reiterated that these words were associated, in his mind, with the Latin Message.

On April 8, during a sitting at which Mrs. Sidgwick was the sitter, Myers <sub>P.</sub> made the following statement :

(Myers <sub>P.</sub> communicating, after referring to the Latin Message and poem) I made a circle.

E.M.S. Oh! a circle. Yes, I remember.

As it suggested it to my mind . . . I then drew or tried to draw a star . . . through the other light.

E.M.S. I see ; you drew a star.

And I did so so you would U.D. that I U.D. the message.

E.M.S. Yes.

And I did this (a star was then drawn).

E.M.S. Yes, there was a star drawn.

I drew it so you would U.D. that I did it, also a crescent.

## The Latin Message Continued (I) 147

E.M.S. Do you remember the name of that poem?  
That is what I am trying to get through here . . . I was very much afraid my message would not be U.D. therefore I drew the star to make sure.

E.M.S. I see.  
that I did U.D. and I will try and give the name again . . . I am most anxious to make Rector U.D. about the name of that poem.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Myers <sub>P.</sub> definitely states that he has drawn a star and a crescent through "the other automatist."

On April 24, Myers <sub>P.</sub> identified as "Abt Vogler" the poem of Browning's which he had in mind when he gave the words "Hope Star" and then added :—

Now, dear Mrs. Sidgwick, in future have no doubt or fear of so called death, as there is none, as there is certainly intelligent life beyond it.

E.M.S. Yes, it's a great comfort.  
Yes, and I have helped to proclaim it for you all.

E.M.S. You have indeed.

Later, during this same sitting, Myers <sub>P.</sub> explained that it was "the uncertainty of Abt and the faith which he held" that recalled to his memory his own experience and prompted him to quote from this poem; and when Mrs. Sidgwick asked him to state definitely his reason for choosing Abt Vogler as his answer to the Latin Message, he explained as follows :—

148 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

I chose that because of the appropriate conditions mentioned in it which applied to my own life. U.D.

E.M.S. I see.

and nothing I could think of so completely answered it to my mind as those special words.

On May 6, Myers P. said in part :—

now one word more Mrs. S. my reply was about the poem, and long ago I gave the word Music which came to me as appropriate to my answer and U.D. of the message.

E.M.S. Yes, quite right.

You must patch things together as best you can. Remember we do not give odd or singular words without a deep and hidden meaning.

On May 7, Myers P. in a passage quoted below, made still another effort to make clear the quotation from "Abt Vogler" which he had in mind as being especially pertinent to the Latin Message.

(Myers P. communicating). If instead of a fourth came a star (here an incomplete drawing of a star was made) . . . In my Passion to reach you clearly I have made Rector try to—draw a star for me so there can be no mistake.

E.M.S. No, there can be no mistake.  
Now are you satisfied ?

E.M.S. Yes, quite.

## The Latin Message Continued (I) 149

Having herewith completed the chronological summary of such incidents in this cross-correspondence as are necessary for our present purpose, let us now proceed to consider these isolated data in their relation one to another, or in the words of Myers p. "patch things together as best we can" and see what comes of it.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE LATIN MESSAGE CONT. (II.)

FOR the purpose of patching things together and considering the various data in their relation one to another, our starting point will be Mrs. Verrall's script of December 17, 1906, which it will be remembered, was begun just as Mr. Piddington finished dictating to Rector the first nine words of the Latin Message. Now, the dominant theme of this script is clearly MUSIC or HARMONY, the word MUSIC being mentioned four distinct times, a fact which assumes interest for us when considered in connection with the statement made by Myers P. on May 6, 1907, to the effect that he had "long ago" given the word *Music*.

But why, may very naturally be asked, should we attribute to Myers this script of Mrs. Verrall's which is unsigned? Mr. Piddington meets this objection thus: "In spite of the absence of signature I have no hesitation in attributing the script of December 17 to Myers v., for not only is it in the same style as many of the signed communications of this personality, but, as Mrs. Verrall

The Latin Message Continued (II) 151

herself pointed out . . . some of its phraseology is certainly borrowed from a verse-translation of F. W. H. Myers'." The work here referred to is Myers' translation of two Greek Oracles, published in *ESSAYS CLASSICAL*, pp. 97-100, and the particular quotation is as follows :—

“ O God ineffable, eternal Sire,  
Throned on the whirling spheres, the astral fire,  
Hid in whose heart thy whole creation lies,—  
The whole *world's wonder* mirrored in thine eyes,

. . . . .  
Thee the first Number and harmonious whole  
Form in all forms, and of all souls the Soul.

. . . . .  
Once by God's grace was from thine eyes unfurled  
This veil that screens the immense and whirling world,  
Once, while the spheres around thee in music ran,  
Was very Beauty manifest to man ;”—

Mr. Piddington also sees in the phraseology of this script evidences of the following quotation from Dryden's "Hymn for St. Cecilia's Day" :—

“ From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony  
This universal frame began

. . . . .  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony

This universal frame began :

From harmony to harmony

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,

The diapason closing full in Man.

. . . . .  
As from the power of sacred lays

The spheres began to move,”

But Mrs. Verrall's script of December 17, 1906, is not the only script that shows traces of this

poem of Dryden's; for Miss Verrall's script of February 17, 1907, contains the words "heavenly harmony" and "diapason," and these are actual quotations from it. Moreover, the occurrence in both scripts of the word "diapason," together with the fact that the "Harmony" of Mrs. Verrall's script is, as Mr. Piddington points out, "clearly a heavenly harmony," serve to bring these two scripts into direct relation with each other. A further interesting thought in connection with this word "diapason," which occurs to me as I write, is that this is the term used to designate the two foundation stops of an organ, and it is on an organ that Abt Vogler, in Browning's poem of that name—the poem that figures so prominently in this cross-correspondence—is improvising. "Diapason," then, like

"the throbbing Soul,  
Saw through the sound the burning of the flame."

seems again like a foreshadowing of "Abt Vogler." And still another point of connection between these two scripts is suggested by the use of the word "mystic," which, while occurring in both of these scripts, occurs nowhere else, as Mr. Piddington says, during the period occupied by the experiment of the Latin Message, although during that time Mrs. Verrall produced sixty-three scripts and Miss Verrall seventeen.

Now this script of Miss Verrall's of February 17 which, as we have just seen links up with that of Mrs. Verrall's of December 17, also links up with her own script of February 3, by means of

the following points. In both scripts the word "star" and a drawing of this symbol appear; furthermore, while the script of February 3 contains a possible first approach to Browning's *Pied Piper of Hamelin* in the words "pipe" and "a healer from aliens," the script of February 17 has an undoubted reference to this poem in the form "rats everywhere in Hamelin Town." Then again, these two scripts of Miss Verrall's contain several points in common with Mrs. Verrall's script of January 28. When sending this latter script to Mr. Piddington on the 29th, Mrs Verrall added on the back of the envelope a pencilled note suggesting that the words in it—viz., "wings," "winged," and "Vogler" (Vogel)—might be an attempt at "bird." Now Miss Verrall's script of February 3 which contains, in common with Mrs. Verrall's script of January 28, the word "star" and the allusion to Browning already noted, contains also the drawing of a bird; while in her script of February 17, the drawing of a star followed by the words "that was the sign she (Mrs. Verrall) will understand when she sees it," and again, "and a star above it all," is closely allied to the "aster (star sign)" of the script of January 28.

As this script of January 28 is of especial interest to this cross-correspondence experiment, let us pause in the process of correlating the scripts, in order to examine it in greater detail. It will readily be seen that not only does Browning, who appears in the scripts of February 3

and 17 by means of implicit reference, pervade the whole of this script, but that a poem of his, "Abt Vogler," is explicitly mentioned by name. Moreover, the word "Hope" makes its appearance in this script in the line immediately preceding that in which "Abt Vogler" is mentioned, and particular attention is directed to it by means of the following curious device. In the script, the phrase "the hope that leaves the earth for the sky" is evidently a misquotation of the phrase in the poem that reads, "The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky," and that Mrs. Verrall was perfectly aware of this misquotation is shown by the following excerpt from a letter which she wrote to Mr. Piddington on February 15—"I knew perfectly well when I read the script that it should have been 'passion' which left the ground for the sky—and I was annoyed at the blunder! The *ἔρως ποθεινός*, which came straight out of a passage that I had been translating in the course of my work, represents 'passion.' And I wondered why the silly thing said 'Hope.'" It would appear, therefore, that the misquotation was intentional and made for the purpose, as already suggested, of calling particular attention to the word "Hope."

Mr. Piddington when first reading these scripts, thought them meaningless, and it was not until Myers <sub>p</sub>, during the sitting of February 11, said that he had given the words "Hope Star Browning" to Mrs. Verrall, that Mr. Piddington, upon re-reading her scripts, noticed that they did contain

## The Latin Message Continued (II) 155

a possible allusion to these words. He then, for the first time, read Browning's "Abt Vogler," and was immediately struck by the extraordinarily apt answer to the second sentence of the Latin Message which could be extracted from one of the only passages in the poem in which the word 'star' occurs."

"But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,  
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!  
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to  
man,  
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but  
a star.  
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is nought;  
It is everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said:  
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:  
And there! Ye have heard and seen:  
consider and bow the head!"

Summing up his impressions as to the pertinency of this stanza to the Latin Message, Mr. Piddington says: "Were one to search English literature for a quotation pertinent to the experiment suggested in the Latin Message, it would be difficult to find one more felicitous than these lines from stanza vii. of *Abt Vogler*."

It is interesting to note Mr. Piddington's reason for thinking it was this stanza which Myers<sup>p</sup> had in mind. He first noticed that in both Mrs. Verrall's scripts emphasis was thrown on the word "Star;" then, later, after reading "Abt Vogler," he was particularly impressed with the pertinency of "aster *τέρας*" the opening words

of the second script, to the star in the poem which was framed out of "three sounds" and was "both a sign and a wonder." The "broken sounds" of the script also seemed to him suggestive of this particular stanza. Later on, he found further support for his line of reasoning in the following definition of *τέρας* given in LIDDELL'S and SCOTT'S "Greek-English Dictionary," "any appearance or event, in which men believed they could see the finger of God," this definition employing the actual phrase in stanza vii., "But here is the finger of God." Again, the phrase "Justice holds the scales," suggested "each tone of our scale," a suggestion that was strengthened when Myers P. at the sitting on May 7 succeeded in giving the word "scale" thereby completing the quotation "in my passion to scale the sky;" this play on the three different meanings of the word "scale" being quite in keeping with the character of the whole experiment in which, as we shall see, anagrams play so important a part. Finally, the *διὰ πασῶν ῥυθμός* of Miss Verrall's script of February 17, suggested the lines "each tone of our scale in itself is nought; *It is everywhere in the world*" of this same stanza; while the phrase "the mystic three," following as it did, the words "the heavenly harmony," brought to his mind "the three sounds" of stanza vii.

Now, turning back to the examination of the scripts and their relation to one another, we find a connection established between the scripts of

## The Latin Message Continued (II) 157

February 17 and January 23 by means of the similarity of the anagrams which appear in both as well as by the emphasis which each throws on "star."

The following interesting incident which Mr. Piddington relates in connection with these anagrams attains added interest when considered in conjunction with Rector's statement of January 2, that *Hodgson is helping Myers with his translation*. It appears that when Mr. Piddington first read the script of February 17, which contained the words "rats, star, arts," he got the impression that somewhere he had seen these anagrams before, an impression which, in spite of his efforts to rid himself of it, persisted; furthermore, he seemed to remember having seen them in Dr. Hodgson's handwriting among the papers in Boston, U.S.A., which, after Dr. Hodgson's death, he had gone through early in 1906. And it was because of the persistency of this impression that he eventually wrote to Dr. Hodgson's executors in America and asked them to look through Dr. Hodgson's papers for one containing the words "rats, star, arts." In August, 1907, he received from Mr. Henry James a sheet of paper on which, in Dr. Hodgson's handwriting, were the following anagrams:

RATES		
STARE	ASTER	
TEARS		TERESH
TEARS		ESTHER
TARES		HESTER
		HE REST
ARE ST		REST HE
ST ARE		THREES
A REST		HERE ST
REST a		THERE'S
STAR		
TARS		
RATS	(COAL) TARS	
ARTS		
TRAS		

In describing his feelings when he saw this paper Mr. Piddington says:—"I confess that when this came into my hands I felt as I suppose people do who have seen a ghost; for, though not surprised to see the 'rats, arts, star,' anagram, I was positively startled when I saw the anagram 'rates, stare, tears, aster,' etc., of which I had no recollection whatever."

One further interesting point in connection with these anagrams to which Mr. Piddington calls particular attention is, that although three people independently make anagrams of the four letters A T R S—Hodgson in his lifetime and Mrs. Verrall and Miss Verrall in script—none of the three hits on the obvious anagram T S A R. This fact would seem to tell a little in favour of Hodgson *post mortem* being concerned in the scripts of Mrs. and Miss Verrall which contain the anagrams,

## The Latin Message Continued (II) 159

especially as Mrs. Verrall, like Hodgson, produced a five-letter anagram on E T S R A as well.

It is also interesting to note in connection with the anagrams produced by Miss Verrall that, far from being a hodge-podge arrangement of words, each word seems to have been chosen deliberately and because of its direct bearing on the subject-matter of this cross-correspondence. "Star" is obviously one of the three words so strongly insisted upon by Myers <sub>P</sub>; "rats" we have already considered in its implicit reference to Browning; and "arts" in the phrase "No arts avail" when taken in conjunction with the phrases "the heavenly harmony," "the mystic three," and "and a star above it all," is, as Miss Johnson says, strongly suggestive of the following lines from "Abt Vogler":

"It (i.e. both painting and poetry) is all triumphant art, but  
art in obedience to laws. . . .

But here (i.e. in Music) is the finger of God, a flash of the  
will that can,

That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound but  
a star."

This completes our brief examination of the scripts of Mrs. and Miss Verrall in their correlation to one another and to the statements which Myers made at various intervals during the progress of the Latin Message cross-correspondence experiment; and we realise that, however definitely we can trace an interweaving of material in the scripts, the ultimate value of the experiment must depend upon how far Myers <sub>P</sub>

showed knowledge of what appeared in these scripts. For, if this communicator is considered to have displayed actual knowledge on this point, it follows that such consideration must tend to strengthen the theory of the existence of an extraneous intelligence responsible for, and capable of, directing the production of diverse and fragmentary "bits" which, when fitted into place like pieces of a picture puzzle, form in their entirety the complete pattern of the whole.

## CHAPTER XXII

### MARIEMONT AND SIR OLIVER LODGE

ALTHOUGH the value of such experiments as the foregoing is fairly obvious to all, it is, nevertheless, interesting to know what real students of these matters like, for instance, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett, or J. G. Piddington feel regarding them and I have therefore chosen a brief statement of their opinions for inclusion here.

Mr. Piddington writes that, "On the problem of the real identity of this directing mind—whether it was a spirit or group of co-operating spirits, or the consciousness or sub-consciousness of some living person—the only opinion I can hold with confidence is this: that if it was not the mind of Frederic Myers, it was one which deliberately and artistically imitated his mental characteristics."

In the "Church Family Newspaper" of November 5, 1909, Sir Oliver expresses his opinion thus, "What we are quite clear about is that ingenuity of a high order has been at work, even if it be only deceptive ingenuity—nothing that can with any justification be styled 'imbecility'

and that, to whatever agency the intelligence may ultimately have to be attributed, intelligence and scholarship and ingenuity are clearly and unmistakably displayed. Of that we have no doubt whatever."

While Sir William Barrett, in his book "The Threshold of the Living," expresses himself even more emphatically. He says, "The significance of the more recent communications—through Mrs. Piper, the late Mrs. Verrall and several other automatists—which contain what have been called 'cross-correspondences,' is precisely this that they seem inexplicable except on the recognition that some intelligence, which is certainly not the conscious intelligence of any incarnate mind, has planned, co-ordinated and directed them."

The value of such experiments was also apparent to Prof. William James who, while taking no active part in them, yet discussed them at much length with various members of the S.P.R. during his trip abroad in 1908 after which, upon his return to the States, he wrote to Mrs. Piper as follows :—

95, IRVING STREET,  
CAMBRIDGE,  
*November 28, '08.*

"DEAR MRS. PIPER,

I have hardly got going in my old ruts after my return from Europe, but I hope to get in to see you some day. I am glad that the sittings have recommenced and I hope that you will confine them

## Mariemont and Sir Oliver Lodge 163

entirely to work along the evidential lines carried on in the past few years and not go in for tests or advice sittings when you can possibly escape it. I'm sure it interferes with the other work.

We are all well and I hope you are. My wife sends regards and so do I, to you all.

Very sincerely yours,

WM. JAMES.

P.S. I saw Mrs. Sidgwich, Miss Johnson, Lodge and Piddington in England. They all spoke with much regard of *you all*."

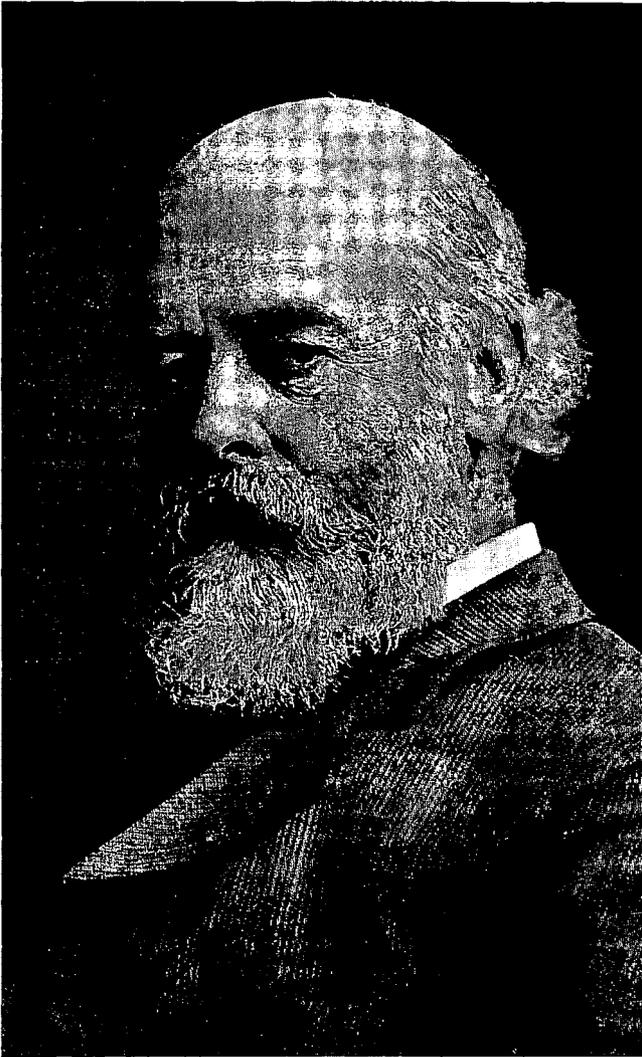
Thus Mrs. Piper's work during the winter of 1907-08 takes its place—a very important place—in the growing annals of psychical research; and at the conclusion of the Society's experiments in the spring, my mother felt that she could then return to America with the full consciousness and satisfaction of work well done.

We left London early in May and went direct to Edgbaston where we spent a further three happy weeks at "Mariemont," renewing the delightful friendships of the previous autumn. As was not unnatural in his capacity as Principal of Birmingham University, Sir Oliver took considerable interest in the curriculum of the private school which my sister and I had attended in America, being most favourably impressed with its comprehensiveness; but in its entire omission of the study of astronomy, he considered it remiss. One night after dinner, when the heavens were particularly clear, he asked the boys to set up his big telescope on the lawn, and this being

## 164 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

done, for well over an hour he instructed us in the mysteries of some of the constellations, stars, and planets, afterward presenting us with a copy of his book "Pioneers of Science," which he inscribed to "Alta and Minerva Piper, from the author, with love and good wishes, Oliver Lodge." Only the other night, I picked up this book intending to renew my acquaintance for half an hour or so with Herschel and Newton, but so fascinatingly is the story told that it was long after midnight when I finally laid the book down and went very sleepily to bed!

Quite naturally, Sir Oliver rarely allowed any interruption to occur in the regular routine of his well-filled days; but there was one notable exception to this rule while we were there. One morning at breakfast, he suddenly announced his intention of taking my mother, my sister and myself, together with little "Youki Inouyé," that same day to Stratford-on-Avon. To say that we were amazed is putting it very mildly, but with a wild scurry and scramble we succeeded in getting ourselves together and ready to start at the appointed time. Sir Oliver could never bear unpunctuality in anyone. On the journey there, I remember how tremendously impressed I was with Sir Oliver's powers of concentration. As soon as the train had started, he announced that he had work to do and did not wish to be interrupted until the journey's end, and thereafter, in spite of the conversation about him, and the bustle and commotion caused



SIR OLIVER LODGE

by departing and incoming passengers, he remained immersed in his books and papers until Stratford-on-Avon was reached. Then, gathering up his things and storing them away in his capacious pockets, he entered into the business of the day with all the enthusiasm and enjoyment of a boy.

There was not much that we did not see that day, the first thing being the old home of John Harvard, the founder of Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and outside of which Sir Oliver good-naturedly allowed himself to be "snapped" with the others. Then the old church at the bend of the winding Avon. Here, after wandering around for a while, Sir Oliver was recognised by the verger who mysteriously producing a book from somewhere among the folds of his black gown, begged the big man literally towering above him, for his autograph. Nor was Sir Oliver allowed to leave the church until he had inscribed his characteristic signature in the visitors' big book to which he was ceremoniously conducted by the verger. And again, at the little inn where we all had lunch, Sir Oliver was recognised by "mine host"; indeed, it was both interesting and pleasing to notice the admiration and respect accorded to this distinguished but simple and unassuming man, wherever we went that day. Although tired and quite ready to rest when "Mariemont" was again reached, the day was unanimously voted a huge success, and the little souvenirs which Sir Oliver gave us all are

still carefully preserved among our many treasures of those days.

But it was not only for the happy times and pleasant friendships of "Mariemont" that I have always blessed those visits. It was there that I had instilled into me that important and far too often neglected, or ignored, lesson of life the unwisdom of indulging in too prolonged or rigid mental application without judiciously interspersing it with some form of physical exercise, or other form of relaxation. Although, at the time of which I write, Sir Oliver's days were very full with his duties in connection with the principalship of the University, as well as with his own writings, he, nevertheless, always found time for a game or two of tennis which in those days he enjoyed greatly. For instance, I remember one day late in May when as I sat reading in my room, there came a knock at my door and upon opening it I found Sir Oliver in his white tennis flannels looking, as we should say in modern parlance, "thoroughly fed up." "I want a little exercise, Alta, will you have a game of tennis with me?" queried the big man. "Of course, Sir Oliver; give me a few minutes to change and I'll be with you." And joining him on the court a little later we had a jolly good game for rather more than an hour, or until the tea gong rang, after which the recesses of Sir Oliver's study swallowed him up again and we saw him no more until dinner time.

As a matter of interest I should like to record

here that, of all the scholars and savants whom it has been my privilege to know during my mother's long association with psychical research, Dr. Richard Hodgson and Sir Oliver Lodge have somehow conveyed to me the strongest impression of complete sanity and normality. Both strong, virile men, they yet combined with their splendid physical development and fine mentalities a deeply spiritual nature which rounded out and perfected the whole to a most unusual degree. My mother always felt this most markedly and regarded it as a real privilege, for so long a time and so intimately, to have been associated with two such splendid and outstanding personalities.

Finally, it was during this second visit to "Mariemont," in the spring of 1907, that was consummated with "Violet," Sir Oliver Lodge's eldest daughter, that friendship that was ever to grow in strength and beauty until her death in 1924. Perhaps how this delicate but rarely beautiful spirit was regarded, not only by myself but by my mother and sister as well, is best shown by the following passage from one of my mother's letters written just after the news of Violet's death had reached me in America. "Life cannot but be the richer," she wrote, "for such a friendship. Such rarely beautiful characters are seldom found in this queer world of ours, but when they are one cannot estimate in words the value of their friendship. One can only feel and be grateful for having experienced it."

At the conclusion of our visit to "Mariemont"

we went to Tarbert, a little village beyond the Kyles of Butte in Scotland, and there we had the pleasure of renewing our friendship with Mrs. Thompson and her family who had rented a cottage in this beautiful and secluded little spot for the month of June. I do not believe there were more than two days in that whole month when the sun shone; but the continuous rain did not in the least deter us from long tramps across the heather-covered moors, or from long hours in a row boat nosing in and out among the many beautiful coves with which this part of Scotland abounds.

In fact we soon came to regard the inclement weather very much in the light of the old Scotsman, the baker of the village, who chancing to meet my mother and Mrs. Thompson splashing through the heavy downpour one morning, characteristically answered their disgruntled greetings with: "Aye, it's a wee saft, I shouldna wonder to see rain afore nicht!"

After this delightful holiday in Scotland we returned to Liverpool and shortly thereafter, on July 7, sailed for home, landing in Boston some ten days later in the very worst heat wave I remember.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF POWER

IT has always seemed a very great pity that the work done in England during the previous season could not have been carried on systematically and along similar lines in America after Mrs. Piper's return. There is no doubt that grave difficulties stood in the way of this as it would not have been an easy task to find a trained and experienced person who would have been able, either from a financial or academic point of view, to spare the time necessary. As a matter of fact, one or two persons who were approached on the matter refused the suggestion for one or both of the above reasons. Thus, when Mr. B— again offered to take charge of the sittings, gratis, the English Society accepted his offer gladly.

Now, in view of the facts stated above, it is, perhaps, unfortunate that it should be necessary here to refer to the management of the work during the ensuing two seasons, 1908-09, in other than a complimentary manner ; but in the nature

of this little volume, which is intended to be an accurate account of Mrs. Piper's life and work, this important period in that work cannot be overlooked or passed by without comment. Moreover, it should be clearly understood that, except where those concerned in the investigation and development of Mrs. Piper's phenomena have touched upon or, even in some small degree, have affected her personal life, they are referred to in these pages merely in the light of participants in that investigation, and any criticism of their methods is *ipso facto* purely impersonal and inserted merely as a matter of record.

With this clearly in mind then it must, unfortunately, be recorded here that the management of Mrs. Piper's work during 1908-09 was a grave mistake. Contrary to Prof. James' suggestion and advice the work, far from being carried on along systematic and evidential lines, was devoted largely to private and personal sittings of which, moreover, inadequate or no records were kept. But by far the most unfortunate and regrettable mistake of all was the introduction of sitters unfamiliar with the *modus operandi* of this particular psychic, or, indeed, as subsequent events seem to prove, unfamiliar with the most rudimentary laws of psychic phenomena; sitters who, without supervision of any kind, undertook to make certain physical tests and experiments of such an unwarrantably harsh character that they resulted, as will be seen overleaf, in the temporary withdrawal of power.

## Temporary Withdrawal of Power 171

Following immediately upon this period, Mrs. Piper, in October, 1909, made a third visit to England under the auspices of the Society. It was not an auspicious moment for a visit of this kind, however, as soon transpired. Unduly tired when she sailed, Mrs. Piper contracted an exceedingly heavy cold on the voyage from the effects of which she did not completely recover for many months. This circumstance greatly increased her general feelings of fatigue and, naturally, did not help to produce those conditions of good health and general well-being upon which her phenomena are in such large measure dependent for success. In fact, it was not until the late spring and early summer of 1910, that Mrs. Piper was able to give her first two or three sittings in England. These were given under the supervision of Sir Oliver Lodge who also supervised in the following spring and summer the few subsequent sittings which Mrs. Piper was able to give prior to her return to America in the autumn.

During this brief period, the recovery from the trance was prolonged greatly beyond the normal duration and was frequently attended with considerable difficulty, a condition which, not unnaturally, gave rise to a feeling of uneasiness on the part of the sitters. The Emperor Group of controls also appeared disturbed by these conditions and at a sitting on May 24, 1911, they advised the withdrawal, for a time at least, of the power. On July 3, a sitting which had previously

172 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

been promised to Lady Lodge, was given at "Mariemont," and was opened by a new control, "Mme. Guyon," and closed by Imperator. This was the last sitting given in England, and the last trance-sitting given for a long time, although communications by means of automatic writing, unaccompanied by trance as formerly, continued intermittently until about 1915 when the trance state again made its appearance. As will be seen in the following letter, Sir Oliver refers therein to some of these automatic scripts which began in England shortly before Mrs. Piper's return to the States.

"MARIEMONT,"

EDGBASTON,

14th October, 1911.

"MY DEAR ALTA,

Many thanks for the clear particulars you have sent about the important piece of script, also for the additional thirteen pages. Please thank your mother for this and tell her how sorry I am that she is so soon crossing the Atlantic (they are evidently making an effort to get some things through before she goes), but that I hope things will settle themselves there, and that we shall be able to welcome her back again before long,

Yours affectionately,

O. J. L."

To me the explanations for the conditions attendant upon Mrs. Piper's phenomena at this time and as outlined above, although extremely regrettable, are both normal and simple. During the twenty odd years of her connection with the

## Temporary Withdrawal of Power 173

English Society for Psychical Research (with the exception of the brief period immediately following Dr. Hodgson's sudden death already referred to), until her return to America after the second visit to England, Mrs. Piper's phenomena had always been supervised by men like William James, Myers, Lodge, and Hodgson; men in whose ability to handle with due wisdom and care the investigation of her phenomena Mrs. Piper's inherent feeling of confidence had without exception been merited to the fullest. This is indisputably proved, if proof were necessary, by the fact that although the physical experiments employed by these investigators\* were considered sufficiently drastic to establish the genuineness of the trance state, and, at least to a great extent, Mrs. Piper's insensibility to pain while entranced, the experiments left no injurious after effects upon the medium. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of those physical experiments which certain investigators made during the season of 1909, one of which made,—as I was afterwards told when I complained of the results—to establish the degree of anesthesia present in the trance state, resulted in a badly blistered and swollen tongue which caused Mrs. Piper considerable pain and inconvenience for several days; while yet another left on the palm of the right hand a series of small very red marks, something like pin pricks, in the form of a circle. This last test resulted in numbness and partial paralysis of the right arm for some time afterward.

\* Chap. X., pp. 65-66.

Now it seems reasonable to suppose that experiments such as those above might very naturally have two possible results on the sensitive organism of a psychic. Firstly, the application of presumably some liquid sufficiently powerful in its action to blister the tongue, and the use of some instrument which resulted in a partial paralysis of the hand and arm for several days, might conceivably prove a shock sufficient to upset, to some extent and for some time, the delicate balance of that as yet little understood mechanism which we know only as psychic: and secondly, when it is realised and taken into consideration how completely Mrs. Piper places herself in the hands of her investigators during a sitting, it can readily be understood what the violation of her confidence in the wisdom and integrity of her investigators must mean to her, and how, when once shaken, such confidence might be difficult to regain. Wherefore, it does not seem difficult to explain, or to understand the cause of the conditions attending on Mrs. Piper's phenomena in England during 1910 and '11; conditions which resulted in Imperator's ultimatum that the power must be withdrawn for a time in order to repair the "machine."

It is this temporary and partial cessation of the phenomena which has given rise in the past to the belief among many that Mrs. Piper had "lost her power," a statement which I have frequently heard during the past ten years or so and, occasionally, seen in print, notably in Flournoy's "Spiritism

## Temporary Withdrawal of Power 175

and Psychology," where he states, with reference to the duration of mediumistic power, that "it is gradually lost over a period of years or, on the contrary, suddenly wrecked by harsh methods of experimentation—as in the case of Mrs. Piper." But that Mrs. Piper's power, although remaining in abeyance for some years, was not "lost" will be fully shown in later chapters.

Before going on to other matters, however, I desire to state here emphatically that never in Mrs. Piper's years of experience and connection with the English Society for Psychical Research, except in the instance of G. Stanley Hall and his assistant, Dr. Amy Tanner—referred to above—has the most complete and absolute confidence in the discretion of her investigators been other than merited in the fullest degree.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### RESUMPTION OF POWER

**A**LTHOUGH for a few years following Mrs. Piper's return to America in October, 1911, her power was to a large extent seemingly in abeyance, yet during this time messages, by means of the automatic writing, were frequently given for Sir Oliver Lodge and other friends of years gone by; and these, as before leaving England I had been asked by Sir Oliver to do in the event of their being received, I transmitted to the various persons for whom they were intended, keeping in each instance a careful record of both messages and all data concerning them.

These communications though unaccompanied by trance were, according to their recipients, clear, pertinent, and in nearly all instances voluminous. No attempt during these years was made either to encourage the resumption of the trance or to undertake the continuation of systematic experiments or investigation; and for the first time, therefore, since she had begun her work Mrs. Piper was able to live a life of quiet and unobtrusive freedom. That is to say, for instance, that

she was able to meet and talk with acquaintances, or friends, without the ever-present consciousness that conversation must be closely watched and guarded for the reason that a word or remark casually uttered at such times, *might* later on be regarded as the probable source of an otherwise important communication at a sitting; and in the same way and for the same reason she was able during these years, as never before, to handle and examine a book, a picture, or a photograph in the homes she visited, without the feeling that such objects thus handled *might* be suspected of forming the nucleus of a future communication purporting to be the emanation of a discarnate intelligence. In other words, she was, during this interval, able to live the normal life of a woman unhemmed round with the mesh of scientific restrictions and preclusions; while my sister and I, although much preoccupied with our music—both being professional musicians—were yet able to enjoy in greater measure than ever before the companionship and comradeship of our mother.

But, while all this undoubtedly had its compensating side, it must not be imagined that Mrs. Piper rejoiced unequivocally in this greater freedom, or that she regarded other than with deep regret the circumstances which had brought it about; for the main purpose, and the one which had originally influenced her in deciding to use her gift exclusively for purposes of scientific investigation, she regarded as still unattained; a keen dis-

appointment after all the years of intelligent and faithful adherence on her part to the exigencies of that investigation.

As has always been her custom Mrs. Piper, during this time, continued to spend several months of each year in the country far away from town and all appertaining thereto ; and it was during one of these quiet, restful sojourns in the mountains under the following circumstances, that the trance condition made its first re-appearance.

In the late summer of 1915, I was asked through the automatic writing to request Miss Robbins, one of Mrs. Piper's earliest sitters, to be present at a meeting "as of old" which would take place on Sunday, the eighth of August. This I did, and although her acquiescence entailed a journey of several hours and necessitated her spending the week-end out of town which, in view of her impending trip to California she was reluctant to do, Miss Robbins nevertheless acceded to "Rector's" request. Accordingly on Sunday morning, the 8th, Miss Robbins having arrived the previous evening, preparations were made for a sitting which was, as we understood the message, to be accompanied by the deep sleep of old ; nor were we misled in these expectations for the sitting took place as and how we expected.

I have given these facts somewhat in detail because this meeting was important from two points of view : first, it marked the return of the trance condition which had been held in abeyance for the four years previously ; and, secondly, it was

at this time that the "Faunus" message, relating to the forthcoming death of his son "Raymond," was given for Sir Oliver Lodge, the *raison d'être*, presumably, of "Rector's" request for this sitting to take place.

In the following chapter will be found the original message as it was received by Miss Robbins and myself on this occasion, together with comments and interpretations of its significance by Sir Oliver, Mrs. Verrall, and the Rev. M. A. Bayfield; but should readers desire a more detailed analysis of this incident and its construed application to the subsequent death of "Raymond," it can be found either in Sir Oliver's book "Raymond," Part II., Chap. II., or in Mr. Piddington's paper in Part LXXII Vol. XXIX. of the Proceedings.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FAUNUS MESSAGE

THE sitting opened with greetings to Miss Robbins followed by comments and advice on her forthcoming trip to California, after which the control, "Hodgson," began abruptly as follows: "Now Lodge while we are not here as of old, *i.e.* not quite, we are here enough to give and take messages. Myers says you take the part of the poet, and he will act as Faunus. FAUNUS. Myers. *Protect* he will U.D. (understand). What have you to say Lodge. Good work, ask Verrall, she will also U.D. Arthur says so." For a moment from the previous reference to "poet" Miss Robbins misunderstood the name "Arthur" as alluding to Tennyson, but upon suggesting this to the control she was told—"No. Myers knows. So does . . . you get mixed but Myers is straight about Poet and Faunus." Commenting on the name "Arthur," Sir Oliver says "'Arthur' clearly means to us Arthur W. Verrall."

The following interpretation and analysis of the above message are excerpts from a paper by Sir Oliver Lodge in Vol. XXIX of the Proc.

“My son Raymond joined the army, September, 1914. He trained near Liverpool and Edinburgh with the South Lancashires, and in March, 1915, was sent to the trenches in Flanders. In the middle of July he had a few days' leave at home and on the 20th returned to the front.

“The first intimation that I had that anything might be going wrong was a message from Myers through Mrs. Piper in America; communicated apparently by ‘Richard Hodgson’ at a time when Miss Robbins was present, on August 8, 1915, and sent me by Miss Alta Piper together with the original. A copy of this script was sent by me to my friend Mr. J. Arthur Hill in the ordinary course, and returned endorsed by him. (Sir Oliver gives the extract and then continues).

“In order to interpret this message, I wrote to Mrs. Verrall as instructed, asking her: ‘Does THE POET AND FAUNUS mean anything to you? Did one “protect the other”?’ She replied at once (September 8, 1915) referring me to Horace, Ode II. xvii. 27-30, and saying:

“‘The reference is to Horace's account of his narrow escape from death, from a falling tree, which he ascribes to the intervention of Faunus. Cf. Odes II. xiii.; II. xvii. 27; III. iv. 27; III. viii., 8 for references to the subject. The allusion to Faunus is in Ode II. xvii. 27-30.’

Me truncus illapsus cerebro  
Sustulerat, nisi FAUNUS ictum  
Dextra levasset, Mercurialium  
CUSTOS virorum.

“‘Faunus, the guardian of poets,’ (‘poets’ being the usual interpretation of ‘Mercury’s men.’)

“The passage is a very well-known one to all readers of Horace, and is perhaps specially familiar from its containing, in the sentence quoted, an unusual grammatical construction. It is likely to occur in a detailed work on Latin Grammar.

“The passage has no special association for me other than as I have described, though it has some interest as forming part of a chronological sequence among the ODES, not generally admitted by commentators, but accepted by me.

The words quoted are, of course, strictly applicable to the Horatian passage, which they instantly recalled to me.”

“I perceived, therefore, from this manifestly correct interpretation of the ‘Myers’ message to me, that the meaning was that some blow was going to fall, or was likely to fall, though I didn’t know of what kind, and that Myers would intervene, apparently to protect me from it. So far as I can recollect my comparatively trivial thoughts on the subject, I believe that I had some vague idea that the catastrophe intended was perhaps of a financial rather than of a personal kind; though, as Mr. Piddington has now reminded me, a falling or fallen tree is a recognised symbol of death—the symbolism being perhaps derived from a misunderstanding of Eccl. xi. 3.

“The above message reached me near the beginning of September, 1915, in Scotland. Ray-

mond was killed near Ypres on the 14th September, 1915, and we got the news by telegram from the War Office on September 17th."

The following interesting and more detailed interpretation of this incident is contained in a letter from the Rev. M. A. Bayfield which Sir Oliver embodies in his paper.

"Horace does not, in any reference to his escape, say clearly whether the tree *struck* him, but I have always thought it did. He says Faunus *lightened* the blow; he does not say 'turned it aside.' As bearing on your terrible loss, the meaning seems to be that the blow would fall but would not crush; it would be 'lightened' by the assurance, conveyed afresh to you by a special message from the still living Myers, that your boy still lives.

I shall be interested to know what you think of this interpretation. The 'protect' I take to mean protect from being overwhelmed by the blow, from losing faith and hope, as we are all in danger of doing when smitten by some crushing personal calamity. Many a man when so smitten has, like Merlin, lain

'as dead,

And lost to life and use and name and fame!'

"That seems to me to give a sufficiently precise application to the word (on which Myers apparently insists) and to the whole reference to Horace."

In a postscript to this letter Mr. Bayfield adds the following:—"In CARM, 111 8, Horace describes

himself as *prope funeratus arboris ictu*, 'well nigh killed by a blow from a tree.' An artist in expression such as he was would not have mentioned any 'blow' if there had been none; he would have said 'well nigh killed by a falling tree'—or the like. It is to be noted that in both passages he uses the word *ictus*. And in 11.13.11 (the whole ode is addressed to the tree), he says the man must have been a fellow steeped in every wickedness 'who planted thee, accursed lump of wood, a thing (meant) to fall (this is the delicate meaning of *caducum*—not merely "falling") on thine undeserving master's head.' Here again the language implies that he was struck, and struck on the head.

Indeed the escape must have been a narrow one, and it is to me impossible to believe that Horace would have been so deeply impressed by the accident if he had not actually been struck. He refers to it four times . . .

I insist on all this as strengthening my interpretation, and also as strengthening the assignment of the script to Myers, who would of course be fully alive to all the points to be found in his reference to Faunus and Horace,—and, as I have no doubt, believed that Horace did not escape the actual blow, and that it was a severe one.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### SOME SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES

**I**T is incidents like these of the Faunus Message and the cross-correspondence tests that make us pause and think! What power is responsible for them? From whence do they emanate?

The ramifications of telepathy, which phenomenon has now pretty generally been accepted, although admittedly not fully understood, are legion; but are they, when all is said and done, sufficiently numerous, or sufficiently elastic, satisfactorily to explain the foregoing type of incident? And, if not, what theory is?

One hypothesis which has sometimes been advanced as an explanation of Mrs. Piper's phenomena, is that of hypnosis. But Mrs. Piper has *never* been successfully hypnotised. Experiments towards this end have been tried by Professors James and Hyslop, and by Dr. Hodgson, but without success as such is understood by hypnotists. "I could not affect her consciousness," Professor James says (Proc. Vol. VI.). Dr. Hodgson admits that he was likewise unsuccessful; while Professor Hyslop states his

conclusions thus:—"I have never found the slightest traces of suggestibility as that is known to the practitioner." (Vol. XVI.)

While dealing with the hypnotic hypothesis, a theory advanced by Mrs. Piper herself may be of interest, although from the very nature of things it is evident that as a critic or elucidator of her own phenomena, Mrs. Piper's opinion must necessarily be of little value.

One day, during our stay in Woking in the winter of 1910, while my mother and sister were walking with Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, my mother in reply to Mrs. Sidgwick's question whether she herself had any idea as to the nature of her power, said that she had sometimes wondered if the trance could be a state of self-induced hypnosis. This suggestion appeared to interest Mrs. Sidgwick who said she had never thought of that. Some time later when reading her voluminous report on the Piper phenomena (Proc. Vol. XXVIII.), I found that Mrs. Sidgwick had adopted this suggestion as the theory upon which her arguments in this volume of the Proceedings are based.

I mention this *en passant* as, when Mrs. Piper had previously suggested this hypothesis to Prof. James, and to Dr. Hodgson, both of whom had been familiar with her phenomena practically from their inception, they had rejected it emphatically as not being in keeping either with the medical, or psychological, facts of the case and, therefore, as untenable.

Another hypothesis sometimes suggested is that of a secondary personality, an hypothesis which, like that of telepathy, is often stretched to great limits by persons who, either ignorant, or careless, of scientific definitions, imagine the power possessed by secondary personalities to be capable of displaying all manner of supernormally acquired knowledge.

That this idea is entirely inaccurate is clearly shown by the following paragraph from a letter of Professor Hyslop's to Miss H. A. Dallas.

"The scientist has to have a term to denote the sub-conscious production of matter which is neither supernormal nor spiritistic, but derivable from the normal experience of the subject, and latent to the normal consciousness and memory.

"As secondary personality is known to the scientist, it has no traces of the supernormal . . . We must remember that the term secondary personality is not a name for any special power of the mind other than the normal, as many people have supposed, but it is as I have defined it. . . .

"Mrs. Piper shows no traces of secondary personality as defined and recognised in psychiatry or pathology."

These, then, are a few of the most salient theories, or hypotheses, which from time to time have been advanced as being explanatory of Mrs. Piper's phenomena, in contra-distinction to that of

NOTE.—From *Mors Janua Vitae*, page 69. Quoted by kind permission of the author, Miss H. A. Dallas.

the spiritistic hypothesis. Which theory one accepts as being most satisfactory at the present stage of progress in the field of psychical research, is, of course, largely a matter of personal and individual opinion ; and whether a concensus of opinion on any one theory will ever be rendered imperative and inevitable by facts elucidated from further psychical research is, at the moment, problematical. It is, however, I think, conceivable that episodes like those of the Cross-correspondence and Faunus Messages, if accumulated in sufficient numbers, may in time form a beacon of truth whose rays will at last penetrate even the enveloping darkness of uncertainty, and so sweep away the least remaining shadow of a doubt.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### RECENT PHENOMENA

**D**URING the intervening ten years between 1914 and 1924, Mrs. Piper's psychic power although apparently as clear and strong as ever, was yet used only for occasional sittings and at irregular intervals; regular or systematic work during this time being impossible for two reasons. One was the constantly increasing demands made upon her time and strength during this period by the gradually failing health of my grandmother to whom my mother was devoted; the other being the same reason that we have met before, namely, the seeming impossibility of finding a suitable person to undertake the supervision of the work.

But in the autumn of 1924 Dr. Gardner Murphy, a young, enthusiastic, and highly trained psychologist, connected with the departments of psychology both at Harvard and Columbia, obtained permission to conduct a series of sittings which extended into the late spring of the following year. This series was productive of a good deal of interesting material as the outcome of

which, permission was sought and obtained from the English Society for Mrs. Piper to work with the newly formed Boston Society during the season of 1926-27. Doubtless a report will be issued in due course by the proper authorities covering this period of Mrs. Piper's work. In the interim, however, I am able, through the courtesy and interest of Margaret Deland, to give here two remarkable incidents taken from the series of sittings which she had with Mrs. Piper during this time. The first instance, which I shall call the "button" incident, was written by Mrs. Deland for the Clark University Symposium which was held at Clark University, Worcester, Mass., in November and December, 1926; the second incident, or "galley proof" episode, has not so far been published.

In her paper for the Symposium, Mrs. Deland makes use of the ingenious argument of a scientific sieve through which, by means of the familiar tags "Clairvoyance," "Intuition," "Coincidence," "Telepathy," etc., she essays to push various incidents of ouija board spellings, automatic writings, visions, and so on, in the contention that if any refuse, even after "some pushing and straining," to pass through the meshes of this sieve it is a logical deduction that this residuum argues for the theory of survival. We will let her tell this "button" incident in her own words.

"I know another story," she says . . . "It is concerned with a baby's rompers. About a year and a half ago a friend—whom I will call 'Molly'—

and I were sitting with Mrs. Piper in Boston, and 'Molly's' sister, Lucy, who had died, 'purported' (as the saying is) to write with the entranced Mrs. Piper's hand. She said that the day before she had seen her mother in another town, doing so and so. The statement was correct; but as Molly happened to know exactly what her mother had been doing at the time she, of course, credited the information to mind reading on the part of Mrs. Piper. Then another personality began to write but paused to say :

'LUCY HAS GONE AGAIN TO FIND MOTHER AND SEE WHAT SHE IS DOING.'

I, rather surprised, said, 'What! now!' There was no reply; the other communicator just went on writing about his own affairs, then some twenty minutes later paused to say abruptly :

'HERE'S LUCY!'

"I said, as nearly as I can remember, 'Well, Lucy, did you see your mother? What was she doing?' Mrs. Piper's hand wrote :

MOTHER JUST LOOKED AT MORNING NEWS (here followed a drawing of newspaper) AND LAID IT ON A LITTLE TABLE. PICKED UP WHAT LOOKED LIKE A BOX OF BUTTONS (here the hand drew seven little circles—O O O O O O O—suggesting buttons) AND SHOOK THEM. LOOKED INTO IT. PICKED UP TWO OR THREE AND SAT DOWN IN A CHAIR TO PUT THEM IN ANOTHER PLACE.

"Later, this was reported to Lucy's mother, who said that at the time this was being written in Boston, she may have been reading a paper; she generally did at about that hour, but she couldn't be certain. But she *was* certain that

she had taken up a little tray of buttons, perhaps a dozen, shaken it, because (she remembered) some ravellings were clinging to the buttons, then picked out two, and sat down to sew them on to her little granddaughter's rompers. To me, those buttons for a baby's bloomers lie as a residuum in the sieve, when golden crowns or harps would have slipped through! No eye of flesh saw that simple domestic scene. Mrs. Piper, in Boston, knew nothing of Lucy's mother, or of her occupation; nor did Lucy's sister, Molly, have any idea what was going on in Cambridge at eleven o'clock that April morning. Yet here is a statement co-incident with an event; 'she picked up a box of buttons and shook them.'

Now, the second, or "galley proof" incident which I want to give here, is rather longer and more complicated than the "button" incident; but, I think, even more interesting—and, perhaps, remarkable. It concerns a large bunch of galley proof which having finished correcting under pressure, Mrs. Deland had at last with a good deal of relief despatched, before starting on a holiday, to the office of the magazine which was to publish it. Weeks later, she was horrified to receive word from the magazine that they had not yet received the proof now long overdue. Then ensued a frantic series of telephone and telegraph messages in an attempt to trace the "lost" MS.—seemingly, however, without success. In the midst of all this turmoil and distress,

Mrs. Deland had a sitting with Mrs. Piper at which she was told that the proof was in the office of the magazine, that it would be found, and that a boy and a dog were mixed up in its loss. The script as Mrs. Deland received it that day was in part as follows :—

IF YOU WILL INQUIRE AND STICK TO IT I WILL HELP TO GET IT AND THAT IS A PROMISE. I TELL YOU THEY ARE NOW IN THE OFFICE. SLIPPED UNDER IN BAG. WILL YOU PLEASE BECOME ACTIVE ABOUT IT AND QUESTION BOY AND YOU WILL FIND ME RIGHT. JUST TRUST ME NOW. *YOU WILL GET IT.*

There was also mention made, as I have said, of a boy and a dog in connection with the loss of the proof.

And now after this brief preliminary, let us read Mrs. Deland's own account of the incident as she wrote it out for me at my request.

KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE,

*February 13, 1928.*

“MY DEAR ALTA,

The story of the lost manuscript is, briefly, this :—In the winter and spring of 1926 I was reading the proof of my last novel, ‘The Kays.’ I was awfully tired, and was reading the stuff under a good deal of pressure. In the midst of it we packed up and went down to Hampton, Virginia, for a rest of two or three weeks. On the way we stopped over for a few days in New York; but even these few days had to be given up, to some extent, to proof reading. I was with a friend on 83rd Street, and had no way of sending my corrected proof, as I finished it, down to the office of the magazine which was publishing it, and I was afraid to trust it to the mail; so I telephoned the Editor’s

office and asked her if she would send a messenger up to 83rd Street to get some proof; just how much I didn't know. This was done, and to my great relief I got rid of a big roll of some twenty galleys. Then, with an easier mind, I started south for Hampton. There, I immediately went to work on more proof, and every three or four days I would mail a batch of it to New York. By the time I was ready to come back to Boston, the work was pretty much done, and when I settled down in my little apartment at Riverbank Court I had not very much ahead of me to do. You may imagine, then, my consternation, when one day—I think it must have been the 31st of March—I received a letter from the Editor of the magazine in regard to various matters of business, and at the end of it came a casual post-script: 'By the way, we haven't yet received your proof for "such and such" a number of the magazine.' I was perfectly flabbergasted—if you will permit the slang—because I knew that I had read innumerable proof sheets and sent them back, at various times, nearly a month before; I didn't know, however, *which* sheets went at any special time. Of course I telegraphed immediately to the effect that *the proofs had been read and despatched to them*, and that I feared it was lost! Then ensued, of course, a frantic exchange of telegrams between us. I took it for granted that the proof had been lost in the Hampton, Virginia, post office as several different rolls had been posted there; so I sent a long despatch to a friend in Hampton, asking him to go over to the Hampton post office and hunt the thing up. I said that I had mailed proof there, and that I had taken a receipt for it, but that, unfortunately (just two or three days before the notification from the magazine came) I had destroyed this receipt. The people in Hampton telegraphed back that they had made every possible exertion to get on the track of the lost proof, but that all they knew was that it had been registered at the Hampton post office, and a receipt was given me.

“That was all they knew about it! The New York post office then tried to get on the track of it but at the office of the Magazine they said, definitely, that it had never been received at their office. In the midst of this confusion, when I was confronted by the necessity of reading over again this whole tremendous batch of proof, I was to have a sitting with your mother. I confess that for once my mind was in such a turmoil that it seemed useless to keep the appointment, for I didn't suppose anything would come to me. Nevertheless, such appointments are too precious to be thrown overboard, so a friend and I went to Allston—but we were both in a very pre-occupied and worried frame of mind.

“We had our sitting and your mother's script was, as usual, voluminous, and I, reading it as it came out, could not see very much in it. But I brought it home with me and that night, after I had gone to bed, I began to read it all over. You know I don't read your mother's writing *very* easily! However, I did my best, and I studied especially certain references to the lost proof, a subject I had introduced. In the midst of reading it a sudden conviction came into my mind; the conviction was so acute that it was almost like a stab. It was this: *The missing proof is in the office of the Magazine.* This, of course, on the face of it, seemed perfectly ridiculous. The one place on earth where that proof was *not* likely to be was in the office of the magazine which so distractedly desired it. However, the impression was so vivid and so inescapable that the next morning I called the office up on the telephone and said that I had a very strong feeling that possibly the proof had been, in some way or other, mislaid, and would be found in the office or in the composing room of the magazine. I can remember even now the annoyance, not to say irritation, in the voice of the member of the staff who answered me on the telephone: ‘Oh, my dear Mrs. Deland, *that* is quite impossible! We have *never* received that proof from you.’ This was definite, and

really only what I had expected; yet I couldn't get away from the impression which had come to me when I was reading your mother's script; so I said (perhaps a little faintly) that I wished very much that they would make a further search for the proof. To which this lady answered, very coldly and with a good deal of dignity: 'Of course, we will look, Mrs. Deland, but such a thing is *out of the question!* No proof *could* be lost in this office.' So I rang off and gave the matter up. In three or four hours, however, the pressure of this idea became irresistible, and again I squandered my hard earned money on a long distance message to New York and got hold of this same official. I said that the more I thought of it the more convinced I was that the proof might be found with them. In reply this lady said in effect, and with added coldness, 'I am very sorry, Mrs. Deland, but the suggestion is *entirely impossible*. I assure you that we have looked, that every care has been taken, and that your proof is not here *and has never been received.*' So there was nothing for me to do but ring off and resign myself to reading all over again some twenty-five galleys of proof. I think it was about half past two when my hopes were thus finally dashed. At about five the telephone rang; it was a telegram from New York saying, with voluminous apologies, *that the proof had been found!* That it was in the office, and that a letter was following to explain to me how this perfectly incredible thing had happened! You may imagine my relief—indeed, I have no words strong enough to express it. Well, the letter came the next morning and it stated that the 'impossible' had taken place; that the proof had been received, and that it had been found in, so the lady said, 'a perfectly impossible place.'

"And now I want to explain the peculiar applicability of the script to the facts. When I received the letter of abject apology from the editor's office it took whatever Christian grace I had to reply, with somewhat cold politeness, that I was glad to know that the proof had

been found, and regretted the trouble they had had, etc., etc. I also said something to this effect: 'Will you be good enough to answer one or two questions in regard to the loss of the proof? Was there, in any possible way, connected with this loss, a boy and a dog?' The secretary who answered my letter was plainly very bewildered by the question—she probably thought I was losing my mind! (I am sorry I didn't think to say then that if I *was* losing my mind it was owing to worry over the inadequacy and bad management of her editorial office!) However, I didn't say this. I merely sent my question off and she made the following explanation: it appears that the proof which was lost was the proof, to protect which I had telephoned to the Editor, when I was in New York, asking that a special messenger might call at East 83rd Street and get it; because, I said, I was 'afraid to trust it to the mail.' Accordingly the office had sent a *boy* to get the stuff and take it down to the Park Avenue office. *The boy had a dog.*

"Perhaps I ought to say—though it shows how stupid I am—that in all that week of hurry and confusion of telephoning and telegraphing, and hunting for the lost manuscript, the one thing that *did not* occur to 'Molly' or myself was to enquire about the first batch of proof which was sent by special messenger to the office. I took it for granted, as did everybody else, that the lost proof was proof mailed from Hampton. There were three or four such mailings, and nobody could tell *which* batch of proof was mailed on any one date. This confusion seems incredible now, but such is the fact. The whole time the proof was being hunted for, it was lying concealed in what the secretary said was an 'impossible place' in the Magazine office! There is the whole thing!"

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### MRS. PIPER, THE WOMAN, AND HER WORK

I HAVE already mentioned that in the late autumn of 1924 and spring of 1925, previous to her temporary association with the Boston Society, a series of experiments with Mrs. Piper was carried out under the direction of Dr. Gardner Murphy. In a letter to Mrs. Piper, written on May 5, 1925, Dr. Murphy wrote as follows: "At these recent sittings I realised more than ever the extraordinary sacrifices which both you and your daughters constantly make for the cause of psychical research, and for the benefit of the sitters; and I want to tell you again what a deep privilege it has been to be associated with your work, and to have an opportunity to see at first hand the powers which I had formerly known through reading the published records."

Now, for more reasons than one, this excerpt cannot but be of interest indicating as it does a tendency at least among the younger generation of investigators, to regard the opportunity of experimenting with a psychic as a *privilege* and

not a right, an attitude which marks a big step forward in the right direction.

But if we concede this point, as ultimately we all must, it then, *ipso facto*, devolves upon the psychic who is willing or desirous to use his or her professed power for the benefit and enlightenment of mankind, to submit to reasonable investigation by reputable and competent psychical researchers; for in no field of research to-day—either philosophical or scientific—are there such opportunities for deception—deliberate or otherwise—as in this realm of psychical phenomena, either physical or mental; and even to the veritablest tyro it must be fairly obvious that the very first essential of definite or permanent progress in psychical research, henceforth, rests upon the establishment first of the *genuineness* of any medium whose powers are being used voluntarily, or professionally, for purposes of demonstration.

A propos of this contention that the honesty of any medium must first be proved before his or her phenomena can justly be considered of value, it is interesting to note that some of the older psychical researchers, who in the past have done much good and valuable work, receive this assertion with a shrug of the shoulders, or the words "Oh, tests," uttered in a tone of voice which renders their meaning quite clear even to the most obtuse. And in such instances, it is only the realisation that it is the surety of their present convictions which has long since to them overshadowed the fact that those very convictions were arrived at

only after years of the most cautious, insistent, and continuous experiments, which enables us to reconcile their reputation as careful investigators with their attitude at the present time!

But to revert, for a moment, to the question of competent investigators. The prolonged and constant study which I have made of the investigators who have experimented during the past thirty years with Mrs. Piper, has convinced me that in addition to the obvious qualifications of absolute probity, exceptional accuracy of observation, and a capacity for carrying on an investigation with purely impersonal and disinterested motives which are essential to every psychical investigator he must, in addition, possess a personality at least not antagonistic to the psychic.

Now by "personality" I do not refer to any attitude of mind which the investigator brings to bear upon his work, for experience has also taught me that one can be as sceptical as one chooses without in the very least affecting the ultimate results of his investigation—although, undoubtedly, pronounced scepticism does *retard* the procurement of these results; but rather do I refer to that subtle, intangible quality, indefinable but easily recognised, which we all possess and are accustomed to call "personality." Probably no one has not at some time or other experienced a feeling of antagonism towards some one which, while not explainable, has yet had the effect of making us feel neither at ease nor at our best when in the presence of the one who inspired it.

Well, just so with psychical investigators. If the investigator possesses a personality, which for some reason or other is antagonistic to the medium, he is but wasting her strength and his own time in continuing his experiments; for, indeed, such a position is analagous to that of an electrician who by connecting two cathodes, or negatives, expects to produce a current of electricity.

I cannot stress this point too emphatically, for surely psychical research presents numerous enough difficulties to the thoughtful man or woman without adding thereto one which can comparatively easily be eliminated; and it is always necessary to remember that, notwithstanding the progress made during the past quarter of a century, psychical research is still in its infancy.

We have spoken of the qualifications of the psychical investigator which are fairly obvious; but what of the qualifications of a genuine and successful psychic? Are there none? Or has not the time yet come when we can answer that with certainty? I do not know. But in the case of Mrs. Piper I do know this—she does not smoke or touch alcohol in any form, not alone from principle but because both are distasteful to her, and it is only just to say that to my personal knowledge—and perhaps no mother and daughters have been more closely, intimately, or constantly associated with one another than we three—she has lived always the most moderate and most upright life consistent with the fact that, after all, she *is* a human being and so sub-

ject to the errors of judgment, mistakes, and minor temptations of us all. Highly strung, often very impatient, and when overtired or overstrained inclined to be irritable, she nevertheless rarely loses that quiet, sweet calm, so truly indicative of a well-poised mind and temperament and which to the whole woman imparts a dignity and charm difficult to describe, yet recognised by all who contact her.

So much for the woman herself; and now what of her work to which she has devoted so many of the best years of her life and for which, in order that it might be put to the best possible use, as it appeared to her, she has given up so much of ease, of luxury, and even of comfort? How much nearer, if at all, is she now to her goal than when she started?

We are all familiar with those sentences of Sir Oliver Lodge's in his arresting book "The Survival of Man" (1909), in which he states that the constant hammering of the pickaxes are wearing thin the sides of the long tunnel, and that already the sounds, made by those at work, are beginning to be heard on both sides of that tunnel. But, perhaps, some of us are less familiar with the sentiments of Sir William Barrett—one of the original founders of the English Society for Psychical Research—who in his paper "Some Reminiscences of Fifty Years Psychical Research (Proc. Vol. XXXIV) has thus recorded his conclusions: "I am personally convinced that the evidence we have published decidedly demon-

strates (1) the existence of a spiritual world, (2) survival after death and (3) of occasional communications from those who have passed over." Richard Hodgson, LL.D., in his report of 1898 states in no unequivocal words that his researches have at last forced him to admit that "Having tried the hypothesis of telepathy from the living for several years, I have no hesitation in affirming that the 'Spirit' hypothesis is justified by its fruits and the other hypothesis is not." Professor Hyslop some time before his death reached much the same conclusion as is shown by the following quotation from his book "Psychical Research and the Resurrection": "Those who read the Piper case carefully will discover that the phenomena have all the appearance, at least, of being organised efforts on the other side to prove the identity of those who have passed away." And in a letter dated November 29, '25, Miss H. A. Dallas, author of "Mors Janua Vitae," and other similar books, wrote to me as follows:—"Your mother has recognised the importance of looking all facts in the face and has always been willing that any test should be applied which might help to elucidate the meaning of her wonderful faculties. The public owes her a debt of gratitude for this and for her patience and courage. As one who has benefited in my search for truth by her marvellous mediumship, I would ask her to accept my grateful acknowledgment."

These are only a few of the opinions which wholly or in part have been founded on the

## 204 Life and Work of Mrs. Piper

work of Mrs. Piper. But now what of the future? Having for well over a quarter of a century been experimented with and tested to a degree to which no other psychic has ever even remotely approximated, does it not now seem but reasonable and just that, henceforth, her power should be used rather for the help and comfort of those who, perchance, may seek it, than for the purposes of further experimentation? While upon the shoulders of some younger, more untried, and less wearied psychic shall devolve, if may be, the future task of assisting Science in its attempt to unravel the problem of mental psychic phenomena?

However this may be, it is but consistent to suppose that the woman whose highest ideal has ever been the rendering to humanity of the greatest possible service in all ways of which she was capable, regardless of any personal sacrifice, should continue in one form or another to render like service to the end, thus meriting if possible, in even fuller measure the tribute which, in grateful and understanding appreciation of her services to psychical research, Sir Oliver Lodge has inscribed on the frontispage of one of his books to her:—

“This book is sent by the author to MRS. PIPER as an instalment of the thanks of the world for her lifelong service and help at the beginning of a difficult science.”