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SECOND SIGHT IN DAILY LIFE

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IN
DAILY LIFE

By
W. H. W. SABINE

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To
E. S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WHILE most of the material used in this book is entirely new, it has been necessary to reproduce a number of passages from elsewhere, sometimes by way of illustration, and sometimes because the passage forms an essential part of an anecdote.

For permission kindly given for this use to be made of extracts from their copyright publications, my thanks are due to Messrs. George Allen & Unwin, Messrs. G. Bell & Sons, *Blackwood's Magazine*, Cambridge University Press, *The Daily Telegraph*, Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co., *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, Messrs. Faber & Faber, Messrs. William Heinemann, Hogarth Press, *The Journal of Parapsychology*, Messrs. John Lane the Bodley Head, Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. (on behalf of Mr. Harold Myers), Mr. Eneas Mackay, Messrs. Methuen & Co., *The New York Times*, Oxford University Press, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Princeton University Press, Messrs. Rider & Co., The Society for Psychical Research, *The (New York) Sun*, and *The Yorkshire Evening Post*.

The source of each quotation is given where it occurs in the present text, and when that source is a book whose main subject is supernormal processes of mind, the title is repeated in the Chronological List of special books on p. 197. That List, being intended as an independent aid to study includes a certain number of other titles which are not mentioned elsewhere in these pages.

I am grateful to Mrs. Edward W. Allison and to Miss Wendy Miles for their valued counsel; and to Mrs. Laura Abbott Dale, Miss Birgit Ljunghult, the New York Public Library, the Society for Psychical Research, the American Society for Psychical Research, and Stanford University (California), for supplying needed items of information.

W. H. W. S.

FOREWORD

UNEXPLAINED phenomena of the mind, whether labelled Second Sight or Extra-Sensory Perception, continue to provide a test for man's will to seek ultimate truth about the nature of his being.

This book is a very personal contribution to the subject of Second Sight, especially the aspect of it which is called Precognition or Foreknowledge. Long observation has led the writer to the conclusion that the real nature of this phenomenon is very different from traditional conceptions of it; and in the concluding chapter he has sought to indicate that the solution of the great mystery which it poses may not be beyond the ultimate attainment of conscious reason.

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CHAPTER ONE

"FLUKE" OR "EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION"?

ON JULY 9, 1870, a stout clear-complexioned man, with a dark grizzled beard, might have been seen making his way towards the entrance of the Bedford Hotel, near Covent Garden, London. He was Shirley Brooks, the editor of *Punch*, and he had just come from the sale of the effects of his friend Charles Dickens, a sale at which he had found the things fetching outrageous prices.

As Brooks entered the Hotel, and proceeded towards the Shakespeare Room, a precinct reserved for certain literary lights, he observed that the hostess's pretty daughter, Helen Warner, was sitting in the office. His diary records what followed:

"Funny thing at the 'Bedford'—I looked in at the little window, and saw Helen writing in a book—her diary. She had marked one day, she showed me, with very black marks. Of course, she was mysterious about it, and she having denied that it concerned a 'he,' I said: 'Then you had your pocket picked.' Her eyes became saucers. 'How strange that you should say that!' It was so, in an omnibus, and she had lost a good deal of money, and had told nobody. My fluke was prompted by a recollection of what happened to poor dear Emily, in New Inn days—she was robbed on her way to see me."

Some months later, on February 13, 1871, my kinsman Brooks was again struck by an unusual incident. This time

he was strolling from Baker Street back to his home in Kent Terrace, Regent's Park.

"Curious experience," he noted, "of which spiritualists would make something. Passing the jeweller's on our Park Terrace, I stopped to look at some signet rings. They put into my head a ring Albert Smith gave me, with a 'Punch' on it. I had not seen it for ages, but I knew E[mily, his wife] had it. While we were sitting in the twilight before dinner, E. said, 'I had a fancy this afternoon to turn out old jewellery and things, and found the ring A.S. gave you—here it is.' Odder—she must have found it about the time I was thinking of it, 4 o'clock."

Too impressed to omit the little incidents from his diary, Brooks evidently felt half-inclined to apologize to himself for expending paper and ink on them. "Spiritualists would make something" of the one; and the other was a "fluke." A man of genial nature, gifted with high spirits and an endless fund of wit, Brooks had been reared in an intensely Protestant atmosphere. Three years of his most impressionable youth had been spent in the home of his uncle, Charles Sabine, a learned and cultured man, but one whose piety was so literal that every day and throughout the night an extra place was laid at his table in case of the Second Coming.¹

Small wonder that the nephew's philosophy was one which may very well be termed typical of the average man of the age of reason discreetly applied, a philosophy under which an inherited respect for the Bible, even though it remained on the shelf, entitled a man's "common-sense" to be his guiding light in all other fields, and as a matter of course to dispose with a smile or a shrug of the shoulder of every suggestion that ran counter to the self-evident laws of a divinely created mechanism. Nor does a man of letters easily forget how the Literary

¹ G. S. Layard, *A Great Punch Editor*, 1907, p. 10.

Club had smiled at Samuel Johnson's willingness to believe in Second Sight, and how the believing Boswell had been told bluntly to "cork it up."¹

"The cock-sure common-sense of the years from 1660 to 1850 or so," wrote Andrew Lang in 1897, "regarded everyone who had experience of an hallucination as a dupe, a lunatic, or a liar." Nor was the commonsensite philosophy (as it may be termed) prepared to admit that a distinction might exist between dabbling in mere superstition and enquiring rationally into supernormal phenomena.

It was this spirit of the age which produced such strange spectacles as Sir Walter Scott, in the same pages in which he treated the stories of the Garden of Eden etc. with profound reverence, dismissing all accounts of psychical happenings in his own time, even those of the Highlanders, with a scepticism as complete as that with which Thomas Paine and Richard Carlile had dismissed the entire Bible.² Yet Sir Walter might have found in the pages of a celebrated work which his fellow countryman, Dr. John Abercrombie, was then putting out, the frank acknowledgment that, so far as some dreams of the future are concerned, "we are compelled to receive them as facts which we can in no degree account for."³

Indeed it may be questioned whether there are many individuals who have passed through life without experiencing some moments of extreme wonder before incidents that do not seem to belong to the world of common-sense, though obviously there are few who reflect on them, and fewer still who record them. Even so, every nation that has had the habit of preserving records bears witness to experiences for which the best known English term has been "Second Sight," and to the misunderstanding and fear of which is attributable much of

¹ J. Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, at March 24, 1775.

² Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 1830.

³ John Abercrombie, *Enquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers*, 1830

the pitiful record of the persecution of witches, and something of the history of the founders of religious movements.

The phenomena of Second Sight, remarks the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "may be classed under 'clairvoyance,' 'premonition,' and 'telepathy,' with a residuum of symbolic visions." The famous Second Sight of the Highlanders is usually recorded as taking the form of a waking vision¹ rather than a dream. Thus M'Quarrie, hereditary laird of Ulva, recounted to Johnson and Boswell:

"He had gone to Edinburgh, and taken a man-servant along with him. An old woman who was in the house, said one day, 'M'Quarrie will be at home to-morrow, and will bring two gentlemen with him;' and she said she saw his servant return in red and green. He did come home next day. He had two gentlemen with him, and his servant had a new red and green livery, which M'Quarrie had bought for him at Edinburgh, upon a sudden thought, not having the least intention when he left home to put his servant in livery; so that the old woman could not have heard any previous mention of it."²

That such experiences are commoner among people living a simple undistracted life than they are elsewhere is not entirely certain; but the difference, if it does exist, seems to lie rather in the external circumstances than in innate qualities. In societies where business is the order of the day, where radios, television, and innumerable machines occupy attention people have less time to observe or reflect upon their supernormal experiences; and where social conventions tend to suppress and render shameful or ridiculous natural functions and emotions, those who have had unaccountable ex-

¹ "He saw him . . . by a waking dream, which I take to be the best definition of second sight." William MacLeod, *A Treatise on the Second Sight*, 1763.

² J. Boswell, *Tour to the Hebrides*, chap. xii.

periences are diffident in speaking of them. If they happen to a man of literary habits they may sometimes be recorded, qualified perhaps as "flukes," but mostly they are allowed to fade from the memory. This is the more regrettable when the circumstances are of an everyday kind: such everyday incidents are valuable evidence, and not less so because they are unaccompanied by any of those sensational features which inevitably, if unjustly, give rise to a suspicion of exaggeration.

One of the earliest writers—earliest, that is to say, in the age of steam engines and stock markets—to give Second Sight the attention it merited was Dr. S. B. Brittan, a New York medical man. In 1865 he published *Man and His Relations* in which he cited numerous cases of Precognition ("Prevision"), Clairvoyance, Telepathy ("Mental Telegraphing"), and other forms of supernormal perception, as experienced by himself, his patients, and others. Speaking of Clairvoyance he said:

"The term is especially employed to represent that mysterious power of perception whereby certain people discern distant objects and occurrences without the aid of light or the use of the organic instruments of vision." Brittan conducted experiments in Telepathy; and on what is now called Precognition he commented:

"Among the problems that have puzzled the brains of metaphysicians the frequent cases of *Prevision* are among the last in their judgment to admit of a satisfactory solution. The foregoing examples will suffice to show that many persons are susceptible of such impressions. With a certain class of minds they are daylight experiences; but they happen to a much larger number during the hours of sleep."

These conclusions, though accompanied by some original ideas, were not new to medical psychologists. From time to time others had recognized the truth of supernormal mental phenomena. But Brittan voiced these conclusions at a time when it was particularly unfashionable to do so.

The publication of Darwin's great work, *The Origin of Species*, which, by implication, established the biological evolution of man by means of natural selection, was just then dividing the world into two main camps, the one of materialistic science, and the other of ecclesiastical dogma. During that brief but fierce battle the study of supernormal psychology was overshadowed, and almost silenced.

It was, moreover, embarrassed by a second controversy, more sensational and of longer duration than the other. Inexplicable phenomena were being produced by mediums of the Spiritualistic movement. Materialism mocked, and the churches denounced; though it was obviously due to the engrained traditions of the latter that popular Spiritualism attributed all the phenomena to spirits.

If the scientific world as a whole, in the full career of great advances in the field of matter, showed no disposition to encumber itself with new-fangled forms of "old superstitions," it was none the less the case that many of its most distinguished members (Wallace—co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of natural selection, Crookes, Flammarion, Zollner, Lombroso etc.) were convinced of the reality of Spiritualist or allied phenomena. We may hold as unproven the prevalent theories that discarnate personalities ("spirits") were the cause of the phenomena. What is incontestable, and in accord with the spontaneous experience of Second Sight in daily life, is that men with the highest qualifications to assess the evidence have found that the human mind possesses powers of which a purely physiological conception of life provides no explanation.

An historic incident occurred in 1876 when Professor W. F. Barrett¹ ventured to read before the British Association a paper on "Some Phenomena associated with Abnormal Conditions of Mind" (i.e. hypnotic and mediumistic conditions).

¹ Afterwards Sir William Barrett.

Barrett is said to have experimented in Telepathy with William De Morgan as early as 1870-3. The paper which he tendered to the British Association was refused by the Biological Committee, and passed on to the Anthropological sub-section where its reluctant acceptance was helped by the presumably ironical comment of a member that as they had discussed ancient witchcraft the previous year, they might as well examine the modern form that year.¹ Barrett had to encounter a good deal of derision after delivering his address, but in later years he could point to the curious fact that the four men—Lord Rayleigh, Crookes, Wallace, and Huggins—who supported him on that difficult occasion, all lived to receive from the British Crown the coveted Order of Merit, an honour limited to twenty-four persons of intellectual eminence.

The year 1882 saw the inauguration at London of the celebrated Society for Psychical Research, under the presidency of Professor Henry Sidgwick of Cambridge, supported by men and women prominent in various fields, and soon joined, it is worth noting, by two bishops of the Church of England.² "It is not," declared Sidgwick, when indicating the Society's attitude to supernormal phenomena, "a scientific way of dealing with a mass of testimony to explain what you can, and say that the rest is untrue. It may be common-sense; but it is not science."

Had such a society come into existence at least as early as the Royal Society of 1662, a beneficial effect might have been produced on the outlook of the political leaders of western civilization without in the least retarding progress on the material side.

But although the responsible investigation of supernormal

¹ Sir A. Conan Doyle, *History of Spiritualism*, 1933.

² It may, of course, be thought that the presence of high ecclesiastics, however liberal-minded, may not be wholly conducive to unfettered psychical research.

phenomena was undertaken too late substantially to affect the unbalanced intellectual outlook of the nineteenth century, although the only respected systems of psychology continued to be those built on a mechanistic concept of the mind, although statesmen who considered themselves realists could adduce the findings of science to justify the policy of frightfulness, there had been kindled a new spirit of research and observation in the field of the supernormal.

A notable sign of the effect produced by organized psychical research on the intellectual world is that an increasing number of academically trained psychologists have recognised the need and the duty to lend their aid in the investigation of supernormal mental processes. Less liable, perhaps, to be influenced by inherited opinions than was an earlier generation, the new workers in "parapsychology" are specialising in experimental work, tabulating and analysing the results thus obtained, and so building up a body of evidence free from preconceived ideas about what may be the explanation.¹

As things stand today it is correct to say that a minority—it may still be a very small minority—of the scientific and reflecting world accepts as proven beyond question that people do have experiences of the kind long known as "Second Sight."² Instead of that term, the description "Extra-Sensory Perception" is now usually employed, frequently abbreviated to ESP. The term was evolved by Professor J. B. Rhine, of Duke University, from the somewhat older "Supersensuous Perception." Other writers have preferred to speak of "Paranormal Cognition," "Extra-normal Cognition," "Cryptesthesia," "the Ultra-Perceptive Faculty," or "the psi function."

The definition of Extra-Sensory Perception suggested in the *Journal of Parapsychology* of Duke University is: "Response

¹ Some account of experimental work is given in Chapter x.

² See Glossary.

to an external event not presented to any known sense." It is not so much in acceptance of a definition that I employ the term in the following pages. The fact that "Extra-Sensory Perception" is to be found in the majority of recent writings makes it desirable as a matter of convenience for that term to continue to be used, while due reservation is made as to its precise significance. It must be acknowledged also that the historic and popular "Second Sight" has not always been associated, like the new label, with a spirit of impartial investigation.

The customary sub-divisions of Extra-Sensory Perception are Precognition (or Foreknowledge), Telepathy, and Clairvoyance. These descriptions, in their turn, must be regarded as temporary, for rarely can a conclusive line be drawn between the experiences thus sought to be classified. Those seeming to fall into the category of Telepathy have received the widest acceptance, not merely because they are so extremely numerous, but because, on the not necessarily sound supposition of some means of mental communication comparable to radio, it has been felt that there may not be in Telepathy any essential contradiction of a mechanistic conception of life. Similar assumptions have aided in a degree of acceptance of cases of apparent Clairvoyance.

But the phenomenon of Precognition, which is the principal subject of the following pages, is the form of Extra-Sensory Perception which is the most strongly contested, not indeed by the minority who have specially studied it, but by the majority who have not. It is too opposed to habitual assumptions, and seems to leave no means by which its acceptance could be reconciled with existing systems.

Precognition has been defined as "Cognition of a future event which could not be known through rational inference" (Rhine), and as "Perception or awareness of future event, apart from information or inference" (Saltmarsh). The auth-

ors of these definitions would be the first to disclaim any finality for them. From personal experience I am inclined to believe that some modification is required on the lines indicated at the conclusion of the next chapter.

To help towards the study of a subject of such supreme importance, I have put forward the selection of my personal experiences of Extra-Sensory Perception contained in this book. They were recorded at the time of their occurrence—mostly in my native England—in a diary which I have kept with fair regularity for some 25 years, and which is contained in a miscellaneous collection of over sixty notebooks. At first, in very much the same sceptical spirit as that evinced by the editor of *Punch* sixty years before, I noted one or two little incidents of a normally inexplicable character; but as time went on such experiences were more and more frequently observed, especially those originating during sleep, and it became impossible to escape the conclusion that they were not “flukes,” not chance coincidences, but indications of unknown laws of the mind.

The material cited in the following pages is usually presented in the original words recorded in the diary at the time; and when that rule is for any reason departed from, there is strict adhesion in the paraphrase to all the relevant facts of the original record. Names of persons and localities are, of course, changed or omitted in cases where this is called for by a due regard for the wishes of people concerned; and some material of value has had to be entirely omitted for reasons of that kind.

The egotistical nature of much of my text is thus inevitable, but it will be found that no autobiographical matter is here intruded which is not strictly relevant to the subject and required for its proper presentation. Most readers will, I believe, understand the special difficulties attaching to the full and precise recounting of the very personal, domestic, and quite

ordinary circumstances in which supernormal processes of the mind most commonly come to our notice.

It is possible that someone may be found willing to seize the occasion which I give for mockery: many of the experiences simply invite the exercise of humour. On that possibility I can only comment that most of those who share the spirit of impartial research are also keenly appreciative of good-natured humour.

As to denunciation in the style of Torquemada or of Calvin, that, perhaps, is no longer to be apprehended.

Women have been a little more forthcoming than men in recounting the intimate type of evidence which is needed. Not many of the well-known male investigators have published experiences of their own—experiences which must surely lie at the root of their interest. But they may well be excused for shrinking from incurring such risks as that run by the lady who reported to the Society for Psychical Research that she had dreamed of being persistently followed by a monkey. In the morning she informed her family of the dream during breakfast, and afterwards took her children for a walk. She was then horrified to meet a monkey corresponding to that of her dream. It proceeded to follow her, and caused her great distress.¹

The comment of an orthodox psychoanalyst was that, according to freudian theories of dream interpretation, being chased by a monkey is a well-known symbol of women's fear of sexual assault. Hence, among the allegedly large number of feminine dreamers about monkeys, there are sure to be one or two who at some time in their lives will chance to be followed by a real monkey after their dream.

The critic had nothing to say about the case of the wife of a former Bishop of Hereford, who reported to the same Society

¹ S.P.R., *Proceedings*, xi, p. 488, and G.N.M. Tyrrell, *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, p. 19. I owe to Mr. Tyrrell the comparison which follows.

that she had dreamed that her husband was away from home, and that she read the morning prayers in the hall of the palace. "After doing so, on entering the dining room, she saw an enormous pig standing between the dining table and the sideboard. This dream amused her and she told it to the governess, who confirms the account, and to her children, before reading prayers. After prayers, she opened the dining room door and saw the pig standing between the dining room table and the sideboard in the exact spot in which she had seen it in the dream. The pig had escaped from its sty while prayers were being read."¹

Possibly it was not merely respect for the episcopacy that held the critic silent: he could scarcely fail to see that even a sexually or otherwise symbolic pig must have had precognitive qualities if it could appear in the dream on the exact spot in the dining room where the bishop's wife subsequently saw the real pig.

"My Lady Seymour," recorded John Aubrey in 1696, "dreamt that she found a nest, with nine finches in it. And so many children she had by the Earl of Winchelsea, whose name is Finch." Other ladies recounted even more striking dreams to the attentive Aubrey, who pertinently remarked, "There are millions of such dreams too little taken notice of."²

We do not have to abandon one particle of our sense of humour to appreciate the wisdom of Aubrey's remark. But observe his reward. He had sought (as in some measure had Samuel Pepys, Robert Boyle and other early Fellows of the Royal Society) to enquire rationally into Second Sight, and he was repaid in the commonsensite age by having his *Miscellanies* derided as the "*Credulities* of quaint old Aubrey."

Small wonder that men shrink back into the shell of fearful

¹ S.P.R. *Proceedings*, xi, p. 587, and H. F. Saltmarsh, *Foreknowledge*, p. 65.

² John Aubrey, *Miscellanies upon Various Subjects*, 1696.

convention, and that the millions of dreams and other experiences continue to be too little taken notice of.

"It is a great venture to speak openly of a personal experience," confessed the Principal of St. Hugh's College, Oxford, and her friend Miss Jourdain in a book¹ which told how in 1901 they experienced in the grounds of the Petit Trianon at Versailles hallucinations which were found, after subsequent prolonged research in the national archives, to correspond to persons and things that had existed in 1789 or thereabouts.

For the reasons previously indicated it might be thought an even greater venture to speak of personal experiences of Second Sight which take a less romantic form. But the narrator of happenings in prosaic circumstances should have the compensating knowledge that most if not all of his hearers have had experiences similar to his own. He should be sustained by the thought that what is at issue is not, and ought not to be, the credibility of any individual. Our acceptance of testimony in other fields is based on the fact that the testimony coincides with, or is of the same character as, our own experience; or on the fact that the consensus of testimony from many quarters is so great that we cannot conceive all the witnesses to be wrong.

Anyone who declares or confesses—I do not know which is the acceptable word—that he has never observed Second Sight or any other normally inexplicable event in his own life, will find ample testimony by narrators of good judgment in the hundreds of volumes of the *Proceedings* and *Journals* of the British and American Societies for Psychical Research, to which are now being added the records of the Departments and Societies for Parapsychology of the universities. There is besides a large literature representing the rational testimony which individuals have felt impelled to record on their own responsibility.

Yet all this considerable literature contains but a very small

¹ *An Adventure*, 1911 (4th ed., Faber, London, and Coward-McCann, New York, 1931).

part of what it might contain, for the supernormal is no casual or rare occurrence. A literature which aspired to cover everything coming under that head would have to cover the acts and thoughts of men's lives in all their minutest details—a practical impossibility, though on a later page it is suggested that an effort should be made in that direction in special cases. The material in the present contribution to the comparative study of the supernormal does not claim to be based on anything like such an effort, yet it is based on a journal which is sufficiently extensive to give an idea of the possibilities. Such material, together with experimental work in the laboratory, points more and more to the normality and constancy of the "supernormal."

Accompanying the descriptions which follow are theoretical comments which, it is hoped, may be found to advance this great subject some small fraction of a degree nearer to understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT PRECOGNITION IS

IN 1938 we were living on the middle floor of a fine brick house in Gloucester Place, near Oxford Street, London.

We liked the house exceedingly, for having been built towards the close of the 1700's, it was replete with the solid charm of that great century. True, my American wife made some reservations about the absence of central heating, and the lack of immediate response in some features of the plumbing. To me those were small matters in comparison with the pleasure of daily contemplating pilasters and fireplaces which accorded so well with old calf volumes and mezzotint engravings.

A few yards away stood Montagu House, home of Mrs. Montagu, the learned woman friend of Dr. Johnson, and founder of the Blue Stocking Club. How many times during my adolescent years in far-away Yorkshire I had imbibed the scenes of Boswell's *Johnson*, how seriously I had pored over the *Essays* of Hume, with what fascinated delight perused the daily lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaffe Esq., and with what satisfaction repeated the ironic periods of Gibbon! Now I was in the midst of their land, daily walking the beautiful garden squares, might run my hand, even as did the great Pan-Jan himself, along the solid iron railings, admire the panelled doors with their heavy brass knockers and varied fanlights, and conjure up visions of the sedan bearers snuffing their torches in the big iron cones.

"The eighteenth century," I had been wont sententiously to claim, "was the most civilised and most elegant period in history. Above all, it was the Age of Reason when superstition was substantially routed, long before the crushing discoveries of geology and anatomy, which, admirable as they are, but completed the earlier work . . ."

When one had absorbed, a little stubbornly perhaps, but faithfully, Locke's mighty *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, all that had followed was indeed little more than a matter of course.

But all was not as it should be as a matter of course. Experiences had been forcing themselves on my attention which Locke had not taken into consideration.

Why, for example, did I dream one night that two palm branches in the form of a V for "Victoria" were presented to the Maharaja of Mysore, and find in my usual newspaper the next day a picture of the Maharaja of Mysore riding in a victoria, with two palm branches which decorated the street forming a V behind his head? Why did I sit up in bed one morning and decide that the white unicorn supporting the King's coat-of-arms must have been based on a white rhinoceros, if such exist; and two hours later open my newly arrived paper to read that the only herd of white rhinoceroses in the world was in danger of being exterminated?

Such seeings at a distance in space or time were happening altogether too frequently to be dismissed as chance, and Hume's dictum that it is always more probable that we are mistaken than that such things happen was assuming the aspect of a mere dogma of the uninformed.

An invitation arrived one day from our friends Commander and Miss X, who had recently taken a cottage in Sussex, and this cottage, from the point of view of antiquity, made all the houses in London, except the Tower, seem modernity itself, for in the main it had been constructed about the year 1450.

"Let's go next Sunday," exclaimed Ellen. "1450—why, that was before Columbus!"

So the following Sunday, November 13, found us seated in a carriage of the Southern Railway, speeding through the soft green countryside. A solitary fellow-passenger impeded freedom of conversation for some time. When he had departed at an intermediate station, I remarked to my wife, "I had rather an odd dream last night."

"What was it? Tell it to me."

"Well, I rather think it is the sort of dream the psychoanalytic consultant on our ground floor would delight in, as proving that one is the subject of a variety of interesting inhibitions. I thought that you and I were walking in the country, but we were not quite sure of our way. I asked a man, and he pointed out what he said was the right way, though somehow I had a feeling it was not. The remarkable thing came next, when I saw the man going away from me with his clothes off. However, somehow I could see only his back, but not his shoulders or the lower part of his legs. That was all."

"Oh . . . and how do you account for dreaming about such things?"

A little nettled by her smile, I endeavoured to reply objectively.

"As we intended going into the country, there is the obvious explanation of that part of the dream, and also of asking the way. But I'm not aware of anything to justify the rest. It has always seemed to me that few things are less attractive than an undressed member of my own sex."

The walk from the station to our friends' abode took us along the edge of several fields, and through a wood delightful even in November. We encountered nothing more exciting than a few rabbits, and a group of children on their way to Sunday school.

Down in a hollow at the edge of the wood stood the ancient

cottage, a medley of grey stone, mellow brick, and black timbers. Our host, Commander X, shook us warmly by the hand, and led the way inside, where walls and cabinets displayed the numerous trophies of his travels in the Far East.

Our enthusiasm for everything was unfeigned.

Yet there was a cloud on X's usually cheery brow. He motioned us into a couple of enormous easy chairs, and it was a moment or two before he broke silence.

"My sister's not here just now. She's had to go up the lane by arrangement with the police."

"With the police? What for?"

"Well, the fact is, there's a man about who's been exposing himself to women. Last Sunday he suddenly stepped out from the trees in front of Janet, let down one garment and pulled up another. Bit of a shock, of course. So the police are now in hiding, ready to pounce, and Janet's walking up there with the dogs in case he does it again."

In mutual amazement my wife and I turned and looked at each other. Here was the central theme of my dream—the exposure of the middle part of the body by a man in the country. Only to me the exposure had been from the rear, to our friend from the front.

It is only necessary to add to this account that the man for whom the police were waiting did not appear again, and that I had to undergo a good deal of chaffing from my friends on the supposed nature of my dreams. Yet all acknowledged that the "coincidence" was very remarkable.

The serious student will observe that any analysis of the above dream, perhaps of most dreams, starts out with a false premise if it is assumed that all the concepts in it are derived from the past and present of the dreamer. No conclusions can have validity unless due consideration has been given to material which may have been drawn from the future.

Such a thing is "impossible" only for those who cling to no more than a certain range of phenomena, while ignoring others that call for more acute observation. The attitude may be compared to that of a man who collects the stamps of the British Empire, and calls it a world collection.

It will further illustrate the point if I cite here a dream I had some years later (January 14, 1943), and which also at first glance would seem to provide very suggestive material for the psychoanalyst. In this dream I was walking in the country and found, to quote the words of my diary, "my way barred by a stretch of water. In this ten men were standing. I said to myself that they were men of ten different nations. Then I noticed most of them had fair hair. Next a huge Venuslike woman—a 'fine woman'—plunged naked, more or less, into the water, and began to swim on her back, but she was raised high out of the water by a big inflated ring, a sort of giant life saver."

Whatever libidos may or may not be detected in this dream, the salient fact is that it represented the picture on the front page of that morning's *Daily Telegraph* which confronted me at breakfast a few hours later. In those days the *Daily Telegraph* was in the habit of publishing a single picture in the centre of its front page, and it happened, with noteworthy frequency, that my dreams corresponded in advance with the picture.

On this particular morning the picture represented about 17 Germans from a sunk submarine swimming to the side of a British ship. They were wearing life-belts of a type which gives the wearer such a buxom appearance that the young men of the R.A.F. nicknamed it after a certain finely built lady of music-hall fame. Here then were the foreigners, about 17 of them instead of 10 as in the dream. They were Germans, accounting for the intervention of the idea of fair hair. They were supported by the high-bosoming type of life-savers which

were symbolised in my dream by the magnificent lady floating on her back supported by an inflated ring.

Many psychoanalytical students will find indications of interest to them in the following vivid dream which I had on the night of January 30, 1940. Once again I quote the actual words I wrote down at the time:

"I appeared to be in a large white box, higher than it was wide, so that one could stand up in it. One side was open, out of which one looked, and in fact it was rather like a sentry box, only much larger, and moreover, as I have remarked, it was white—intensely white like whitewash. With me in this box was a small-sized man with I think only a loin cloth on. In fact he was an Indian, and I understood he was a fakir or some holy person. The atmosphere surrounding him was very pleasant, and he appeared to be guiding me. We were, then, in this box, and the box was floating upright down a river. The next thing that happened was that a map appeared before me by the agency of this fakir who wished to show me the route we were taking. This map was very clear, but very simple. It consisted of a pale reddish brown background on which, in a darker shade of the same hue, was depicted a large river, together with one tributary of lesser size. The river and its tributary were shown to the left of the background. The 'fakir' explained that we would follow the tributary so as to avoid the 'alligators' on the main stream."

At half past four the next day, Wednesday the 31st, my wife and I arrived at Harrods, that palatial Knightsbridge store well known to visitors to London. There in the lounge we met under a previous arrangement a Scottish friend, Mrs. L.H., whose "clairvoyant" powers are a constant source of remark to all who know her.

Aware of her keen interest in such matters I had telephoned Mrs. H. about an announcement I had happened to observe

in the Press that Professor Saurat, Director of the French Institute at London, was giving a series of lectures entitled "Psychical Phenomena." Apart from this general title no indication of the subjects was given.

It was my first visit to the French Institute, and on entering the building I was struck by the unusual dead flat whiteness of the walls, corresponding to the whiteness of the dream box. We sat rather near the front of this white auditorium, and the opening on to the stage being just in front of us, and the ceiling being very high, I had again the impression of my box. I noticed too, with increasing interest, that the curtains on each side of the stage were of a reddish brown colour, corresponding exactly to that of the map in my dream.

When Professor Saurat appeared on the platform I saw him to be a short man, with a quiet confident manner. His subject for the day turned out to be this very one of precognitive dreams. In particular he dealt with the dream of a French officer relating to a part of Germany during the Napoleonic wars, and in order to illustrate the matter clearly Professor Saurat remarked that it might be desirable if he drew a map. He asked the audience whether they would like him to do that, and by a show of hands they indicated that they wished it.

The word "map" had made me sit up in some excitement. Needless to say, mine was one of the hands which went up, but I marvelled indeed when the Professor proceeded to draw on the blackboard a map representing a river and its tributaries, and moreover drew it on the left side of the board.

This admirable case (as Professor Saurat himself termed it when it was communicated to him) leaves the alligators and the Indian fakir apparently unexplained. As to the alligators, it may be observed, although here no question of Precognition is involved, that the name Saurat has a marked resemblance in sound to *sauria*, the name of the genus to which alligators

belong. It was the name Saurat which was "avoided" by the fakir, whose concern with the soul rather than the body identifies him with the lecturer and his psychical subject.

Certainly we must give ourselves pause in our methods of interpreting dreams, a reflection which receives further support from the dream which I had the night before October 15, 1943. On waking I could remember no more than one scene. That was of a baby in a perambulator. A second baby was put into the arms of the first, who exclaimed, "I'm so happy!" The faces of the two babies were close together, looking straight at me.

That morning a young woman with whom my work brought me frequently in contact, asked me ingenuously whether I would like to see four photographs which she brought out of her purse. On looking at them, I saw that the top one was of a baby in a perambulator. The second was of the same subject. The other two showed the mother (sister of the young woman) holding the baby in her arms, her face and the baby's face looking side by side at me like the two dream babies.

The fact that the dream baby who received the other in his arms then spoke was evidently an effort to give him adult status to correspond with the mother; and the words, "I'm so happy" express the natural feelings of a young mother.

Even a dream which is directly amatory in character may be precognitive. One night (that preceding December 30, 1945) I dreamed that I was walking in some public woodlands with a fair-haired girl who was dressed in dark red clothes. I particularly noticed the evergreen trees as we strolled along. The girl was touching me in a very friendly manner.

On waking, I was somewhat perturbed to discover a swelling just under my left ear, and after breakfast telephoned my doctor. It happened, however, to be a Sunday, and the doctor

was not available. The swelling was certainly getting larger, and if the cause was mumps it seemed desirable to know it as soon as possible. Consequently I decided to call at the nearest public hospital, which happened to be situated close to a large public park, including several woodlands.

The hospital porter regarded me with a somewhat inhospitable eye. I suppose that an apparently able-bodied man presenting himself at a public hospital on a Sunday morning is not exactly a welcome sight. But of course he passed me on to the proper department, where I was received by a still more severe elderly Sister who, for her part apparently considered it quite extraordinary that a man of my mature age should have such a swelling. She declined to commit herself to any opinion, and requested me to sit down and wait until the doctor came.

After a long delay the door on the opposite side of the room opened to admit an attractive girl with fair hair hanging down over her shoulders. She was dressed in dark red clothes, and did not seem to me to be much more than nineteen years old.

"Here is the doctor," called the Sister, and as I looked round the room in some bewilderment her lean features permitted themselves a fleeting, perhaps ironic smile.

I did some rapid mental calculation, assumed that the girl's age might conceivably be as much as twenty one or two, and further supposed that allowance must be made for the speeding up of training during war time.

Next moment the girl was gently pressing my cheeks, neck etc., in an effort to diagnose the trouble. This gentle palpation went on for some time, during which I rested my eyes on sprigs of holly, remnants of the Christmas decorations, which were stuck behind the pictures and other objects, and suggested a correspondence with the evergreens in the previous night's dream.

It is hardly necessary for me to make any comment on so clear a fulfillment of the central theme of the dream; but before proceeding to attempt the important task of defining Precognition, a few remarks must be made on my reasons for selecting in the first place a number of dreams which are, or may be judged to be, sexual in character.

The primary reason is the great interest taken in that aspect of dreams by students of psychology, and because the existing systems of the analysis of dreams are mainly based on the assumption of an erotic motivation. Once the psychoanalyst is alive to the possibility of such a thing, he may begin to observe in the case of his own dreams that they may be built up of images which correspond to coming physical experiences and thoughts arising therefrom. Besides the precognitive and clairvoyant elements, consideration must be given to the possibility of impressions resulting from telepathic perception of other minds.

The universality of such telepathic perception has resulted in its endorsement by, at any rate, a considerable number of medical specialists. Dr. Wilhelm Stekel, author of *Sex and Dreams*,¹ etc., even publicly rebuked Dr. Sigmund Freud for neglecting telepathic dreams "which do not happen to fit in with his theory." The question of first importance to the psychoanalyst is naturally the extent to which theories of the mind are affected by telepathic awareness. Certainly Telepathy cannot logically be limited to a few outcroppings of foreign thoughts in dreams which happen to puzzle the investigator. It is a process which—if the great mass of testimony outside the purely medical field be studied—seems to affect every kind of mental process, including, of course, the emotional. It remains for the medical specialist to observe in his own work the possible part played by Telepathy in the origin and develop-

¹ Published by Richard G. Badger, Boston, 1922.

ment of neuroses, sexual or other, bearing in mind that Telepathy is an unconscious process, and must probably be considered, like sexuality, to be repressed.

But it must be pointed out that the constant use of the word "telepathy" to cover all forms of Extra-Sensory Perception is dangerously lacking in precision. It ignores, perhaps it evades, the possibility of Precognition. There is a kind of medical author or lecturer—usually referred to as "brilliant"—who with kindly humour disposes of what he calls "prophecy." Perhaps he recounts the story of some palmist, or of some patient not remarkable for exact observation, thus raising a smile and incidentally flattering his own splendid powers of reasoning. Happily for science there are medical men who, while perhaps they have no such claims to brilliance, have shown that they know what the evidence for Precognition is, that it cannot be brushed aside, and that it must be the subject of continued study.

Tentatively it has been suggested that no system of dream analysis, as such, needs revision as a result of the admission even of Precognition, since the patient may be assumed to have taken material from his future as well as his past to serve the same psychological ends. That, however, is not the first problem, nor the chief one. The tremendous, the overwhelming problem is that of explaining how, under a system of psychology which regards the human mind as nothing more than the integration of motor responses to stimuli, such a process as Precognition can occur. No professional considerations can or should qualify anyone's attitude to that problem.

Every reasonable person to-day acknowledges the immense value, from the therapeutic point of view, of the work of the trained psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. Not only in the consulting room is suffering alleviated, but by means of widespread writings modern psychology fosters in the younger

generation a spirit of rationalism, and places the discussion of sex problems in particular on a franker and more healthy level than that allowed by old-time implications of salacity and sinfulness. It is indeed a noble work which is being done against the dark elements of hush and pretend. All the greater would be the pity if the same sincerity and reasoning power were not displayed in dealing with the formidable problem posed by Extra-Sensory Perception.

It was, no doubt, the too frequent combination of enmity to human freedom with self-proclaimed spirituality that influenced the founder of psychoanalysis in his long unwillingness to concede the possibility of even "telepathy," though scientists of intellect not inferior to his own had given it that degree of acceptance sixty years before. "It testifies to Freud's incorruptible scientific spirit," remarks Dr. Jan Ehrenwald in a recent book, "that at the climax of his career he went far to revise his original uncompromising attitude towards alleged supernormal phenomena, and we pointed out on an earlier page that in so doing he threw open the gates to doubts as to the uncontestably rational nature of his system."¹

"I am not," declared Freud himself, with a just pride, at the conclusion of his lecture on "Dreams and the Occult," "concerned to seek anyone's favour, and I must suggest to you that you should think more kindly of the objective possibility of thought transference and therefore also of telepathy."²

¹ *Telepathy and Medical Psychology*, (W. W. Norton & Co., 1948). See also Dr. L. J. Bendit's *Paranormal Cognition*, (Faber, London, 1944), and articles in the *American Imago* by Dr. Nandor Fodor (Aug. 1942), and Dr. Theodor Reik (Nov. 1939).

² *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, (W. W. Norton & Co., 1933). The slight distinction here made between "telepathy" and "thought-transference" may reflect the view of Dr. C. G. Raue in his *Psychology as a Natural Science applied to the solution of Occult Psychological Phenomena* (1889), where "Fernwirkung" (action at a distance), otherwise thought-transference or "telergy" is distinguished from "Fernfühlen" (sensing at a distance) or telepathy. The former is action to transfer, the latter is reception. See also

The words could have been spoken by the young William Barrett, back in 1876, when confronting the British Association with his unwelcome paper.

If it is to maintain its reputation, and win the respect of future generations, psychology must lend its ear fearlessly rather than kindly to the evidence, not merely for Telepathy, but for Precognition and all other experiences not explicable by the hitherto accepted theories of physical science. It has too long allowed its objectivity to be affected by its anxiety to imitate the great achievement of Darwin. In the evidence for Extra-Sensory Perception there is a clear intimation that the unconscious mind cannot be summed up only as a recapitulation of the primordial. It includes processes inexplicable on a biologic basis.

The Definition of Precognition

A definition of Precognition must be in accord, not with inherited ideas of "prophecy," but with what is actually experienced.

It is evident that all the above recited dreams related to the sense perception that I was going to have. They were precognitive of that perception. In two cases the event had not occurred at the time of the dream, and Precognition is the only form of Extra-Sensory Perception which applies.

In the remaining cases the dreams were precognitive of my mental reactions at the moment when the news reached me, but as in these cases the events had already happened it is necessary to consider the alternative explanations of Clairvoyance in the case of the newspaper pictures etc. (see A in

Dr. James Coates's *Seeing the Invisible* (1906), and J. C. F. Grumbine's *Telepathy* (1915). But recent psychical research is not committed to such distinctions. The supposedly passive mind of the "recipient" may be the active one, perceiving the mind of the supposed "sender."

diagram below), and Telepathy in the exposure case (see B below).

The following classification will perhaps make this problem clearer. It is one which arises in all other cases.

	<i>First Phase</i> Event: photographs or report already existing in newspaper etc., several hours or longer before Precognition. (Newspaper cases. Photo of baby.)	<i>Second</i> Precognition, which could alternatively be called Clairvoyance of existing things.	<i>Third</i> 1-6 hours duration.	<i>Fourth</i> Experience or sense perception (i.e. seeing the photographs corresponding to the Precognition.
A	Event 7 days before Precognition. (Exposure case.)	Precognition, which could alternatively be called Telepathy from persons concerned.	6-12 hours duration.	Experience or sense perception (i.e. hearing account of event) corresponding to the Precognition.
B	Unenacted events, of which the whole causes were not within the cognisance of any one person. (Saurat lecture. Hospital visit.)	Precognition.	8-16 hours duration.	Experience or sense perception of actual event occurring after the Precognition and corresponding to it.
C				

The fact that alternative "explanations," Clairvoyance and Telepathy, may be offered in the majority of cases of apparent Precognition, does not mean that those alternatives are to be preferred. The tendency to do that would be justified only if no clear cases of Precognition were known. But as such cases have been established as decisively as other forms of Extra-Sensory Perception, Precognition is entitled to equal consideration with them.

It may then be observed, if all the details are given that close examination which is always essential, that the telepathic and clairvoyant explanations are open to considerable doubt.

The dream or other experience may be found to contain elements which spring from the individual's personal reaction when the story comes to be heard or the picture to be seen. These elements do not form part of the event, story or picture; they arise in his mind as a result of his sense perception. But they were also present in the Precognition.

Thus in the dream classified above at B, it was my personal prudery that presented the nude man with his back to me, it having been my experience that people undressing before strangers, e.g. on the sea-shore, usually turn their backs to one. Telepathy from the victim would not be expected to be so evasive. Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh dreamed he saw two dogs worrying lambs, some of whom were bleeding at the throat; ten days later he was motoring past a field, and saw two dogs chasing lambs, and there was blood on the latter. Subsequent investigation showed that the dogs belonged to the farmer, and that the lambs' tails had just been docked—hence the blood and excitement.¹ Such cases where the precognitive experience includes errors of judgment and the like, indicate that the Precognition relates to the percipient's own future experience, and not to any more accurate representation of the event.

Consequently true Precognition may take place even when the event has already happened, though outside the normal means of information. The evidence that Precognition is a fact naturally does not rest on cases of that kind: it rests primarily on cases where the event lies in the future, but the secondary cases help towards an understanding of the frequency of Precognition, and may help to a knowledge of its nature.

The attribution of many instances to Clairvoyance on the ground that the object precognised was already in existence, overlooks a circumstance which greatly strengthens the proba-

¹ Edith Lyttelton, *Some Cases of Prediction*, p. 94.

bility that Precognition is the correct explanation.

If, for example, the view be preferred that my dream of the babies was clairvoyant, because the photographs were already in existence, how are we to account for the fact that the Clairvoyance was concentrated upon these particular photographs, and not upon any other of the millions of photographs in existence? As I did not, by normal means, know the photographs existed and would be produced to me, my dream images depended upon Precognition of the coming experience of having the photographs produced to me. The point involved is of the greatest importance, and brief allusion may be made to another case.

A few months before the dream of the babies, my friend and neighbour, Mrs. E. B., offered to show me over an empty house which was for sale. She obtained the key, and the following morning we made the visit together. During the night between the arrangement and the visit I had a dream the main heads of which I wrote down in bed in the dark. During the visit to the empty house, my friend opened a cupboard on a landing, turned over some piles of dusty music etc. which it contained, picked out from the midst and handed to me a pamphlet, It corresponded unmistakeably with my recorded dream images. The details of this and other fulfilments need not be given here—the account runs to 1500 words in my diary. The outline of the case is merely cited as a type, to illustrate that though the pamphlet had undoubtedly lain in the middle of the pile in the cupboard for a long time, its supposed “clairvoyant” cognition by me would be meaningless if Mrs. E. B., whose guidance I was passively following throughout the visit, had not opened the cupboard, turned over the contents, selected the object, and handed it to me with the words, “Here’s something for *you*!”

So far as I was concerned this was a normally unpredictable

"future event" in my physical sense experience. In no essential respect does such a coming experience differ from any other "future event,"—except in any possible cases where the percipient may never hear of the future event.

Precognition is, therefore, implicit in this very common type of spontaneous "clairvoyance," as it is usually called. And this being so, it follows that Clairvoyance is not an absolutely convincing explanation even when the case concerns a letter addressed to the percipient or a newspaper lying outside his door; although in such cases Clairvoyance does have better standing.

Instead, therefore, of the definition, "Cognition of a future event which could not be known through rational inference," and "Perception or awareness of future events, apart from information or inference," I would propose this provisional form:

"Perception or awareness, not attributable to information or rational inference, which corresponds to the future sense perception of the subject, or of another person."

This definition covers equally cases where the future experience is a personal participation in the event, or the receipt of news about it; and even those in which the future of another person is known by a combination of Precognition and Telepathy.

CHAPTER THREE

RATIONALISM, AND POE'S *TALES*

EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION is involved only when the experience cannot be explained by the ordinary means of information and by reasoning based thereon. The dreams related in the previous chapter cannot be so explained; they related to experiences not received by the physical senses until the next day, and so they come inevitably under the head of Extra-Sensory Perception—perception not due to information or reasoning, yet arriving in advance of the physical sense experience.

In considering every case a rigid rationalism, one which allows no fancies or predilections to draw us into conclusions not evident to another reasoning being, is the first essential. It is largely as a result of failure to observe the rule of reason that so much deserved discredit has fallen upon the investigation of some psychical phenomena, in addition to the undeserved discredit due to mere ignorance or unwillingness to adapt to new knowledge on the part of the critic.

Fortunately, when reason is accepted as the sole arbiter, it is usually possible to distinguish between the experiences which come under the head of Extra-Sensory Perception, and those which do not; and these latter, however interesting, attractive, or suggestive they may be, are not included in the present discussion.

In recounting the following experience my object is only to

illustrate, in perhaps the clearest possible way, what does *not* come under the heading of Extra-Sensory Perception. It occurred on October 7, 1927, and the night of that day.

Glancing through the catalogue of a Leeds (Yorkshire) secondhand bookseller, I observed this item:

Finch (W., Canterbury) A Masonic Key, with an Elucidation on the Religious & Moral Beauties of Freemasonry, Ziydvjxyjpix, etc., for the use of Lodges & Brothers in General, dedicated to William Perfect, Provincial Grand Master for the County of Kent, folding emblematic plate, 8vo, original wrappers (92 pp) uncut, Canterbury, 1801, scarce.

On the title is printed, "Please to observe that every book has here on the title page ty Qxzf, & Oivjjxg Qvwgzjpix.

Possibly the fact that I am not a mason made me the more curious to penetrate one of the mysteries of the craft. Calling to mind the ingenious solving of the code in Poe's *Gold Bug*, which I had read recently, I set out to try to decipher the few words given in this masonic code by using the methods described by Poe.

This method is based on the fact that, in English, the letter which most frequently occurs is *e*. After that (according to Poe), come *a o i d h* and so on. In a sentence of any length *e* is almost certain to be the commonest letter, and hence it should be easy to pick out the sign for it. In a similar way, among words, "the" is the commonest, and one has only to pick out a frequent combination of three signs ending in the one assumed to be *e*, to be pretty sure of having the signs for *t* and *h* also. In this way Poe shows that it is no very difficult matter to solve an ordinary code—provided that the message is long enough.

Unfortunately for my budding effort, the words in the masonic code were, as may be seen above, no more than five in number, and offered no means of identifying *e* or "the." I

made a guess that *ty* might be “an”, and then gave the task up as hopeless.

During the night which followed I had a dream consisting of a single picture, and that picture was composed simply of the word A R C H I T E C T U R E. It appeared in violet-coloured capital letters on a black ground. That was all; there was absolutely nothing else in the dream but that one vision.

Next morning, on awakening, I remembered the picture I had dreamed, but did not connect it with the code. I did not even think of the code. But some time after getting up my eye happened to light on the catalogue, and it suddenly flashed across my mind that maybe “architecture” was that long word in code. So, to my considerable excitement, it proved; and the rest of the solution was easy, giving “mc Seal and Written Signature.” *Ty* is thus seen to mean “mc” (no doubt “masonic code”) and not “an”, as I had guessed in my waking effort.

Awake I could not so much as have repeated in correct order more than two or three of the letters of the queer word “ziydvjxyjpix”, yet in sleep I evidently knew the whole word perfectly, and could moreover try it against every word of 12 letters known to me, until I found one that fitted, i.e. one that had letters in the right places corresponding to the two I's, two Y's, two J's, two X's and the rest. My conscious mind had made a very poor showing by my unconscious in the matter of memory and tireless perseverance.

In 1948, nearly twenty-one years after the occurrence of this dream, and very shortly after I had come to America, the homeland of Poe (in 1927 I had scarcely set foot outside Yorkshire, and had no American connection) I noticed a reference to the fact that he had died on the night of October 7, 1849. Thus my dream on the night of October 7, 1927 had been on the exact anniversary of Poe's death, although at the time I was unaware of this.

To what does this amount? Simply, I believe, a coincidence of dates which may be ascribed to chance; and a remarkable exhibition of the deductive powers of the unconscious mind. There was nothing in the dream that contradicted or transcended the ordinary powers of reasoning. The slightest case of Precognition, embodied in the most commonplace incident, would have been of more profound significance.

Extra-Sensory Perception, therefore, does not refer to the powers of the mind carried to a high degree, nor to chance coincidences, but to experiences which in their nature are in contradiction to the powers of the mind as at present recognised by science in general.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CASE OF GWENDOLINE NELSON

THE DAYS of my youth were passed in Yorkshire, amid some of the most beautiful scenery in England.

A few miles from my home stands the ancient city of York, former capital of England, still largely encircled by its Roman and mediaeval wall, and containing streets of sixteenth and seventeenth century houses which make London seem modernity itself. Towering amid it all is the Cathedral whose foundations were laid more than a thousand years ago, and which combines all the phases of Gothic architecture in its immense and beautiful fabric. The surrounding district is rich in ruined castles and abbeys, and the sites of battles famous in history, not one of which did I fail to visit, though my youthful pilgrimage was often a lonely one. Old books, old customs, and old stones were as dear to my adolescent eyes as to those of Scott's Antiquary.

Not without amusement, I recall the afternoon of one of those days. I was gazing into the window of an antique shop, and suddenly heard myself addressed.

"It's very unusual to see anyone so young looking at antiques!"

Turning, I saw at my side a dark, handsome woman of forty or so, dressed completely in black. "I wonder what you read?" she went on with a smile, but with her eyes fixed intently on my face.

A diary extending back only some twenty-five years does not enable me to record exactly the reply I made. It must have included my favourites Scott, Boswell, and Addison, as well as books on evolution and freethought. I may even have mentioned that I liked reading the works of Bishops Butler and Paley—chiefly because I found a certain piquancy in reviewing their old defences of orthodoxy in the light of more recent scientific discoveries.

“Why not come along and let me psychoanalyse you—you must have an interesting mind,” commented the stranger graciously, adding that psychoanalysis was her profession, and that it would cost me nothing.

It is disappointing to have to record that shyness made me decline the opportunity thus held out by the dark lady. Once more I escaped into the past, and soon escaped still more completely through the medium of one of those idealistic, impossible loves which seem not “o’ the earth, and yet are on’t.”

What is noteworthy here (and contrary to a frequent assumption) is that amid those poetry-inspiring surroundings, during the enthusiasms, the agonies, and the solitariness of adolescence, supernormal phenomena made little impression on me.

Only later, when I turned to more conventional ways, discovering that my ideal romance-derived conception of womanhood had little correspondence in the warm and generous natures who successively inducted me into the realities of life, did I begin frequently to observe the occurrence of the supernormal. And it was after I became a married man, paying taxes and gas bills, and entertaining the neighbours to tea, that Precognition, in particular, forced itself repeatedly upon my attention.

During this latter period I was invited to do some teaching work in . . . College, a small private co-educational establish-

ment in London, and one day in October I found myself confronting a class of some thirty girls and young women, together with a few youths.

The occupation was one which no one who knew me in earlier years would have expected me to take up. Assuredly it would have afforded some of my friends considerable delight could they have seen me on the second day of my new work listening to the giggling which arose over some ambiguous phrase in a piece which had been read aloud. But to be able to recall one's own youth while watching its manifestations from the tutorial desk is a truly fascinating experience, one calculated to bring out the observer's true sympathies, and to test infallibly his sense of humour.

"What are you smiling at?" the girls immediately under my desk would sometimes demand, nor did they in their turn seem to lack understanding when, looking into their clear eyes, I shook my head and said only, "Oh, something that happened years ago!"

One day in 1943, after a night spent in the tedium of watching for fire-bombs, I was dozing after lunch in my study, which adjoined my classroom at the top of the old mid-Victorian building. I was roused by the voice of a girl on the landing outside.

"I'm eighteen now, and when I leave here I expect to marry Hughie."

Curiosity is mightier than somnolence. I got up from my old wickerwork chair, and went outside. Two fair-haired girls, who were leaning over the mahogany and iron balustrade and gazing down the stairway, turned their heads at the sound made by the opening of my door. The smaller of the two was well known to me as a popular member of my class, but it was evidently her companion whose remark had roused my attention.

She was a tall good-looking blonde with blue eyes, and one of those broad well-balanced heads which give the impression of stability of character. I knew little of her except that her name was Gwendoline Nelson.¹ As I passed the girls with some greeting, Gwendoline informed me that she expected shortly to be moved into my class. I expressed satisfaction, and a few moments later returned to my interrupted sleep.

This little incident merely drew my attention momentarily to Gwendoline Nelson. I mention it because of what followed, and in view of what followed I have never been able to dismiss from my mind that noon time scene on the dusty sunlit landing of the old house, after I had heard this fine young girl speak of her marriage hopes.

The summer vacation came and went, and shortly after the beginning of the new term, Gwendoline Nelson occasionally appeared in my class, although she was not a regular member of it.

It was then, and to be precise on the night of August 30, 1943, that I had the dream I must now recount. It is freely at the disposal of any investigator who cares to analyse it. In return I ask that due consideration be given not only to the requirements of the particular system to which the investigator may adhere, but to the evidence that the material of dreams and of waking thoughts is drawn from future as well as from past experience.

Once more I quote the original words of my diary:

"August 31 Tuesday. Woke up last night from this dream. I was at a school—as a master—and standing by a number of boys in running shorts and vests. Instead of being plain white or other colour, their garments were striped with a thin pale green stripe. The boys' faces were pastey and unhealthy. I then turned to the left, and there was presented to me, that is

¹ A substitute surname.

held before me, a wooden doll some 12 or 14 inches long. It had the usual flaxen hair, pink and white complexion, and blue eyes. Its clothing was a light blouse, and a skirt of crimson lake. The skirt was rather curved at the bottom, so that the corners on each side seemed to stick out. As I looked, a name was carved across the [flat] wood in large capital letters, the name following a curved line corresponding to the curve [at the hem] of the skirt. This name was GWENDOLYNE. I remarked to myself in the dream that the end of the name had evidently been changed in the same way that I had changed Sabine to Sabyne. That was all. I awoke, remembered the dream, and went off to sleep again."

It is necessary for me to explain—minor explanations are inevitable—that I have always been a keen genealogist. This will not surprise anyone who has read the opening of this chapter. In consequence of this interest I had sometimes reverted for some purposes to the mediaeval English spelling of my name in place of the classicalised form which has grown up more recently.

In the morning after the dream it occurred to me rather vaguely that "Gwendolyne" might refer to Gwendoline Nelson or to some other girl of that name. My opinion, in so far as I had one, was that the dream represented my thoughts about my own surname; while the psychoanalyst will find elements familiar to him.

The day had not gone very far, however, before I was again reminded that the world of dreams is not so readily confined within the deductive logic of either specialist or layman.

At the end of the first teaching hour, I was about to go downstairs to get a glass of water when I noticed that a girl sitting near the front of my class was wearing a blouse striped in green like the boys in my dream. This seemed a trifling correspondence, and I thought no more of it.

On approaching the door I bent down to speak to Miss Butcher,¹ who usually was a very bright little girl, but who on this day was looking rather depressed. In reply to a question she assured me that she felt quite all right. I glanced from her face to that of her companion, Miss Tilly, before I passed on. Both these girls had naturally pale faces; in fact Miss Tilly's was ordinarily almost white, and in the case of any other person you would have said she was on the point of fainting.

I went downstairs, and on the way passed a boy. The place was otherwise quite deserted, as the classes had been changed, and the doors had been shut on the rooms.

Just as I reached the foot of the long winding staircase of which I have previously spoken, and as I was about to turn to the left, the door immediately fronting on the foot of the stairs opened, and out came Gwendoline Nelson. She closed the door behind her, and said good-morning to me.

The sight of the girl, as she stood momentarily still, with her back to the wooden door, almost deprived me of the presence of mind to answer her and go on, for I instantly recognised in her the doll of the dream. There was the flaxen hair carefully arranged on the head, the pink and white cheeks, the blue eyes, the light blouse, and the crimson-lake skirt oddly curved at the bottom just as it had been in the dream. Only the carved name was absent from the living doll.

When I returned up the stairs, I paused a moment on the landing before re-entering my classroom, and while I was there a girl who had left the room during my absence, without leave, came running up, excused herself in passing, and entered the room ahead of me.

I have been so meticulous because the only way in which a dream can be properly judged is where there has been this meticulous attention on the part of the dreamer himself.

¹ This and the other names in this chapter are substitutes.

If now a comparison is made between the waking experiences of these few minutes, and the dream, we have:

First, a girl's striped blouse, the pale faces of two other girls, a boy, and a girl running; all of which were combined in the preceding dream into a group of pale-faced boys dressed in running clothes of the same pattern as the blouse.

Second, the sudden presentation against a wooden door of the girl Gwendoline, taking the form in the dream of the sudden presentation of a flat wooden doll perfectly corresponding to her in all particulars, and even bearing her name.

The waking experiences, it will be observed, *all occurred within a few minutes*, and this close grouping of the correspondences ruled out every possible explanation but the now familiar one of Precognition. There was one point on which I felt such urgent curiosity that I felt I must try to pursue it further.

The next day, Wednesday, happened to be one on which Miss Nelson came into my class. I was quick to observe what she was wearing. It was an old dark dress such as a student might be expected to wear for sitting at desks which in war-time were not always as dustfree as they might have been. When the girl had sat down, I went up to her.

"Tell me, Miss Nelson, weren't you wearing a red skirt yesterday?"

"Why, yes," replied the surprised girl, obviously wondering why on earth I had put such a question.

"Were you wearing it on Monday?"

"No."

"Well, have you ever worn it here before?"

"Not this term. But why?"

"I'll explain in a minute. Just one more question—have you ever worn the skirt here since you joined, apart from yesterday?"

After a few moments' reflection Gwendoline told me she

believed she "might" have worn the skirt "once or twice." I gathered that she had to reserve it for special occasions in severely rationed England, and yesterday she had been going out somewhere. All this questioning naturally enough had aroused the curiosity—and amusement—of the other girls, and I found it necessary to recount my dream to Gwendoline with the others listening. On several faces it was not difficult to see the recollection of similar incidents in their own lives evincing itself in an expression of keen attention.

The matter of the skirt was really a most important one. The girl wore a skirt on Tuesday which I saw in a dream the previous night, which her own testimony showed I had not seen the previous day, or the day before that or during weeks before, if I ever saw it at all, which I had no recollection of doing.

The more I reflected on this dream and its fulfilment, the more it interested me. The vivid correspondence of the doll to the actual girl, and the curious carving of her name in flat raised capitals seemed to me no ordinary form of symbolism. All that day my mind wandered over the strange experience, seeking in every corner for new light upon it. I looked up Gwendoline's record, but it told me little more than her address in Islington.

The following day, Thursday, my curiosity was not in the least abated. Looking again at the address led me to a street map, by which I found that Gwendoline's home was very close to Upper Street in Islington. "Why," exclaimed the genealogist in me, "it's only a few yards from old William's!" Old William was my great-great-grandfather who, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, was living in a mansion house on this same Upper Street, the main thoroughfare of the then rural Islington.¹ Though three generations living in a different part

¹ Now, unfortunately, not so "merry" as when John Gilpin gambolled through it.

of the country separated me from him, I was completely familiar with the facts concerning him. His wife had, as her miniature shows, much the same features as Gwendoline—broad face, golden hair, and blue eyes. No obvious relevance indeed in that, but, although awake (and shaving) my ideas were flitting about with the same *apparent* inconsequence as in a dream: "Perhaps my dream of the doll was inspired by old William!" I mused. "Did they possibly have wooden dolls in those days? Maybe the doll represented his wife." Such was the concatenation of ideas that passed through my head while shaving, as absurd to all appearances as any thoughts could be.

Yet when I sat down to breakfast, and opened the *Daily Telegraph*, my eye fell on the following paragraph:

"'Tiki' for Mrs. Roosevelt. Gift by Maoris. Auckland, New Zealand, Wednesday. Mrs. Roosevelt had a most enthusiastic as well as picturesque welcome from the Maoris yesterday. . . . The presents for Mrs. Roosevelt and her husband were a Maori canoe paddle and a wooden 'tiki'. A tiki represents an ancestor."

Here was the statement that a wooden tiki (little carved image) "*represents an ancestor*" meeting my eye just after my fantastic thought that perhaps the wooden doll represented my ancestor. It is, then, not only in sleep that coming experience is anticipated. The same process may be observed to be going on, though less noticeably, while we are awake.

The fact that circumstances had more or less compelled me to recount my dream to Gwendoline Nelson created a little bond of amused friendship between us. But I did not see a great deal more of her, as her work took her away from my room not long after she had begun attendance there. I believe that, like many students during the war, she took a part-time job in an office.

It was on January 4, 1944, four months and a few days after the dream, that two students came to me with news that left

me shocked and incredulous. Gwendoline Nelson, they said, had died on Christmas Day.

I hastened to a woman member of the staff, who could only confirm what I had been told, and add a few details. Gwendoline was to have gone with a party of students to a theatre a few days before Christmas, under the leadership of this lady. But she was taken ill and removed to a hospital. On Christmas day she fell into a kind of coma. Before doing so, she indicated to her mother and sister that she had gifts ready for them. From the coma she did not awake. My informant believed that Gwendoline had mastoiditis. However, on consulting the public records I ascertained that the cause of death was given at an adjourned inquest, and after a postmortem, as "diabetic coma." To me, and to everyone else, Gwendoline had always had the appearance of being in excellent health, and full of life and spirits.

This tragic event naturally leads to the question as to whether, besides the familiar Precognition of the common-places of the following day, the dream evinced any foreknowledge of the death. Some indications of this there are. The name was carved on the dream doll in flat, raised capitals such as I have often seen on memorial stones of modern type; and a wooden doll is a "dead" representation, which, coupled with my apparently absurd waking thought about it representing my own deceased female ancestor, assumed, in the light of events, the appearance of a guarded symbolism. And there is also the point that my dream related to this particular girl, and not to any one of a hundred others.

A certain impatience is, of course, felt with the indirect nature of most precognitive dreams, and perhaps a disappointment at the absence of those marvellous and sensational features which some old traditions, and even more the activities of fiction writers, have led us to expect. But a case like this,

which I have essayed to recount without undue stress or implication, does possibly point to one reason why real Precognition, as distinct from posterior imagination or invention, must manifest in a cautious way.

Had my dream informed my waking consciousness that this young girl, who seemed only at the beginning of her life, was in truth near the end of it, I should have been in a position repugnant to a very deep respect for a fellow creature. My consciousness of the coming fatality would surely not have escaped the consciousness of the girl: however carefully I had guarded my tongue, she would have read it in my eyes.

But that conscious knowledge of future experiences is so evidently irreconcilable with the life we know, does not preclude us from observing the evidence that future experiences are of a precognisable nature. That the evidence takes a form which ensures our inability to interfere with the course of events is actually reassuring, for it suggests a sense of inner responsibility so dominant that the awareness of this tremendous faculty seems to be brought about only for the purpose of self-correction. It may be the only way, or the only practicable way, of showing ourselves that a purely materialistic philosophy of life is not well founded.

That is one conclusion towards which such dreams as that about my pupil Gwendoline may contribute.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRECOGNITION AND DEATH

ON THE morning of December 16, 1897, Frederick Lane, an actor in William Terriss's company, entered the Adelphi Theatre, London, to take part in a rehearsal.

Before arriving at the dressing rooms he encountered Miss Olive Haygate, also a member of the company, and they exchanged greetings.

"There will be no performance to-night!" declared Lane jovially, and went on to explain that a few hours earlier he had dreamed that he saw Mr. Terriss lying on the stairs leading to the dressing rooms. His chest was bare and his clothing torn aside, so that Lane thought he must be in some kind of fit. Various people belonging to the theatre were standing by, and doing their best for him. Immediately afterwards Lane dreamed that the theatre would not open that night.

He did not take his dream in the least bit seriously. Rather did he regard it as a waggish story about the chief, and on entering the dressing rooms he repeated it in this spirit to several men members of the caste.

In the evening of the same day, as William Terriss reached the private entrance of the theatre in Maiden Lane, and was putting his key in the lock, a man who for some time had been lurking about the lane, rushed forward, and, with a long thin-bladed knife, stabbed the unfortunate actor in the region of the heart and again in the back.

Lane, who was himself on his way to the theatre about this time, heard the outcry resulting from the outrage, and learning what had happened, rushed for a doctor. When he got back to the theatre he saw Terriss lying in the place where he had seen him in the dream. In the interval the wounded man had been carried inside the theatre, but it had been found impossible to take him further than the foot of the stairs leading to the dressing room, and there in less than twenty minutes he died. Terriss's clothing was open as Lane had seen it in the dream, and the same people were standing round and tending him. There was no performance at the theatre that night.

At the request of the Society for Psychical Research, Miss Haygate, H. Carter Bligh, and S. Creagh Henry, members of the caste, wrote out signed statements confirming that Lane had told the dream to them in detail in the morning, when neither he nor anyone else attached any serious importance to it. These statements, with that of Lane himself, are included in a full report of the case published in the Society's *Proceedings*, vol. xiv, 1898-9.¹

Telepathy from the murderer (who, by the way, was found to be insane), would not account for this dream, because the deed was committed—where the murderer obviously intended to commit it—*outside* the theatre, and he could not know that his victim, on being carried inside, would have to be left at the foot of the stairs.

The case well illustrates that it is the coming experience of the percipient himself that is precognised, and not the event. Lane did not foresee the crime. He dreamed a picture ("I saw it like a tableau") of the scene at the foot of the stairs as it would be presented to him, individually, in the future. His dream did not even tell him that Terriss was wounded, let alone that he would die. So far as the demonstration of Pre-

¹ See also London *Times*, Dec. 17, 1897.

cognition is concerned Lane's dream could as well have related to some trivial matter, but then it would never have been recorded, and even the dreamer himself might not have remembered his experience for long.

The too-ready assumption in all ages that experiences under the head of Precognition must be intended as "warnings" of what is to come has prevented a detached judgment of them. The records of mankind teem with legends and anecdotes of solemn *premonitions* given to kings and to every grade of their subjects. These prophecies or premonitions generally portended death or some great calamity.

Thus the seer Theoclymenus warned the suitors in the hall of Ulysses:

I see the walls and arches dappled thick
With gore; the vestibule is thronged, the court
On all sides thronged with apparitions grim
Of slaughtered men . . .¹

The Pharoah of Moses's time dreamed of the coming plagues, and his chief baker of his coming death; while the fate of King Nebuchadnezzar was foretold by his dream of the statue with a head of gold and feet of clay.

More fortunate was Alexander the Great who dreamed of the root that would cure his friend Ptolemy, who had been wounded by a poisoned dart, and thus saved him from dying in anguish. Calpurnia, wife of the dictator Julius Caesar had two premonitory dreams the night before her husband's death. One was symbolic, presenting to her Caesar's statue with blood flowing from it; the other was more direct, and showed him falling under the daggers of assassins.

Not impossibly some terrible precognitive experience occurred to the wife of Pontius Pilate, since Matthew records that even as her husband sat down in the judgment seat, she

¹ Cowper's *Odyssey of Homer*, xx, 422.

sent him this message, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

The assassination of Henry IV of France was dreamed the night before by Marie de' Medici; and it is recorded that Henry III, who was killed by a fanatical monk, had a dream three days before the crime in which he saw "all the royal ornaments, such as sandals, tunics, dalmatics, the mantle of azure satin, the sceptre, the Hand of Justice, all bloody and trampled under foot by monks."

An even more striking symbolical dream was that experienced by King James V of Scotland, father of the celebrated Queen Mary. The historian George Buchanan recorded: "King James V dreamed that James Hamilton (who was executed for high treason) was running at him with his drawn sword; and that first he cut off his right arm, and then his left, and threatened shortly to come and take away his life; and then disappeared. When the king awoke in a fright, and was pondering about the event of his dream, word was brought him that both his sons departed this life, almost at one and the same time."

Queen Mary's great-grandson, James II of England, recounted to John Evelyn, the famous diarist and Founder Fellow of the Royal Society, that a French nobleman at London, seeing the Duke of Monmouth come into the play-house, "suddenly cried out to somebody sitting in the same box, *Voilà Monsieur comme il entre sans tête.*" The Duke was not long afterwards involved in rebellion, and beheaded for it.

Almost everyone has heard the story, recorded by Lincoln's biographers, of how two weeks before his death the President recounted to his wife, his friend Lamon, and others that he had dreamed of seeing in the East Room of the White House a catafalque and corpse, and had been told by a soldier

guarding it that the President had been assassinated.

A selection of slightly fuller accounts will serve to illustrate further some of the principal types of Precognitive experiences which have been handed down, and to show equally that the percipients concerned in these stories are not, as is so often insinuated, either imaginative recluses or professional sooth-sayers.

That other assiduous diarist and Fellow of the Royal Society, Samuel Pepys, made meritorious efforts to collect information about Second Sight, writing to various persons who might be able to help him. On May 27, 1701, the Earl of Clarendon, uncle of the Queen, replied as follows:

"One day, I know by some remarkable circumstances it was towards the middle of February 1662, the old Earl of Newborough came to dine with my father at Worcester House, and another Scotch gentleman with him, whose name I cannot call to mind. After dinner, as we were standing and talking together in the room, says my Lord Newborough to the other Scotch gentleman (who was looking very stedfastly upon my wife), "What is the matter, that thou hast had thine eyes fixed upon my Lady Cornbury ever since she came into the room? Is she not a fine woman? Why dost thou not speak?" "She is a handsome lady indeed," said the gentleman, "but I see her in blood." Whereupon my Lord Newborough laughed at him; and all the company going out of the room we parted: and I believe none of us thought more of the matter; I am sure I did not. My wife was at the time perfectly well in health, and looked as well as ever she did in her life. In the beginning of the next month she fell ill of the small pox: she was always very apprehensive of that disease, and used to say, if she ever had it she should die of it. Upon the ninth day after the small pox appeared, in the morning, she bled at the nose, which quickly stopped; but in the afternoon the blood burst out again with great violence at her nose and

mouth, and about eleven of the clock that night she died, almost weltering in her blood." (*Memoirs of Samuel Pepys Esq., F.R.S.*, 2nd ed., 1828, vol. 5, pp. 296-8.)

Another early Fellow of the Royal Society, John Aubrey, was told by William Penn, proprietor of Pennsylvania, "that he went with his mother on a visit to Admiral Dean's wife, who then lived in Petty France;¹ the Admiral was their at sea. She told them that, the night before, she had a perfect dream of her husband, whom she saw walking on the deck, and giving directions, and that a cannon bullet struck his arm into his side. This dream did much discompose her, and within forty-eight hours she received news of the fight at sea, and that her husband was killed in the very manner afore-said." (*Miscellanies upon Various Subjects*, by John Aubrey, F.R.S., 1696.)

From the collection in Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, 1848, I select this:

"Major André, the circumstances of whose lamented death are too well-known to make it necessary for me to detail them here, was a friend of Miss Seward's [the poetess, of Lichfield], and previously to his embarkation for America [i.e. about 1774], he made a journey to Derbyshire to pay her a visit, and it was arranged that they should ride over to see the wonders of the Peak, and introduce André to Newton, her minstrel, as she called him, and to Mr. Cunningham, the curate, who was also a poet.

"While these two gentlemen were awaiting the arrival of their guests, of whose intentions they had been apprised, Mr. Cunningham mentioned to Newton that on the preceding night he had had a very extraordinary dream, which he could not get out of his head. He had fancied himself in a forest; the place was strange to him; and while looking about

¹ A London street which anciently housed the suite of the French Ambassador.

he perceived a horseman approaching at great speed, who had scarcely reached the spot where the dreamer stood, when three men rushed out of the thicket, and, seizing his bridle, hurried him away, after closely searching his person. The countenance of the stranger being very interesting, the sympathy felt by the sleeper for his apparent misfortune awoke him; but he presently fell asleep again, and dreamed that he was standing near a great city, among thousands of people, and that he saw the same person he had seen seized in the wood brought out and suspended to a gallows. When André and Miss Seward arrived, he was horror-struck to perceive that his new acquaintance was the antitype of the man in the dream."¹

The accounts which follow are culled from different sources:

"In 1844, the Hon. N. P. Tallmadge² was one of a company, invited by Commodore Stockton to make an excursion down the Potomac on the United States war steamer *Princeton*. The party included the President and members of the Cabinet, together with many distinguished gentlemen and ladies. The Commodore proposed to signalise the occasion by firing his 'Peace-maker'—a wrought iron gun of large calibre. Accordingly, a portion of the company assembled upon the forward deck, Governor Tallmadge occupying a position at the breech of the gun. He felt no apprehension of danger; and the first, second and third discharges were unaccompanied by any unpleasant results. The party then went below for refreshments. After dinner the Governor returned to the deck, when he observed that the great gun was about to be discharged for the fourth and last time. He at once assumed his former position.

¹ Major John André was captured September 23, 1780, and hanged as a spy on October 2.

² A Senator from New York, and Governor of Wisconsin.

But the Commodore, President, and heads of the Executive Departments, were still below, and the firing was delayed for a few moments on their account. It was then that a mysterious feeling of apprehension and dread suddenly seized the Governor, and under an irresistible impulse he turned away and followed the ladies into the cabin. Immediately the report was heard, and the next moment came the startling and terrible intelligence that five distinguished gentlemen, including two members of the Cabinet had been instantly killed by the last discharge. In his description of that frightful accident, Governor Tallmadge says: 'I rushed on deck, saw the lifeless and mangled bodies, and found that the gun had burst at the very spot where I had stood at the three former fires, and where—if I had remained at the fourth fire—I should have been perfectly demolished.' " (*Man and his Relations*, by S. B. Brittan, M.D., 1865.)

Mr. Alfred Cooper, a medical specialist, contributed the following account (six years after the event) to the London Society for Psychical Research, and it was corroborated by the then Duchess of Hamilton and her father, the Duke of Manchester: "A fortnight before the death of the late Earl of L., in 1882, I called upon the Duke of Hamilton, in Hill Street, to see him professionally. After I had finished seeing him we went into the drawing-room, where the Duchess was, and the Duke said to me, 'Oh, Cooper; how is the Earl?'

"The Duchess said, 'What Earl?' and on my answering, 'Lord L.,' she replied, 'That is very odd. I have had a most extraordinary vision. I went to bed, but after being in bed a short time, I was not exactly asleep, but thought I saw a scene as if from a play before me. The actors in it were Lord L., in a chair, as if in a fit, with a man standing over him with a red beard. He was by the side of a bath, over which bath a red lamp was distinctly shown.'

"I then said, 'I am attending Lord L. at present; there is very little the matter with him; he is not going to die; he will be all right very soon.'

"Well, he got better for a week and was nearly well, but at the end of six or seven days after this I was called to see him suddenly. He had inflammation of both lungs. I called in Sir William Jenner, but in six days he was a dead man. There were two male nurses attending on him; one had been taken ill. But when I saw the other the dream of the Duchess was exactly represented. He was standing near a bath over the Eàrl, and, strange to say, his beard was red. There was the bath with the red lamp over it. It is rather rare to find a bath with a red lamp over it, and this brought the story to my mind. The vision seen by the Duchess was told two weeks before the death of Lord L." (*Proceedings*, S.P.R., xi, 505-6.)

The Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, author *inter alia* of the famous hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers," recounts this incident which happened in the year 1849: "When little Beatrice [his daughter] was ill, cutting teeth and with whooping cough, I did not think that the nurse-girl was sufficiently alert to attend to her, and so advised my wife to go into the bedroom, and sleep with Beatrice. I was then in the room in which Old Madam [an ancestor] died, above the drawing-room. I was awoke about the middle of the night by my wife, who came in and said: 'I cannot sleep. I hear people tramping, carrying something down the stairs.'

"I sat up and argued with her. It was a windy night, and the noise might be caused by the gale. As I was speaking there sounded three heavy strokes as if made by a clenched fist against the partition between the bedroom and the dressing room.

" 'It is only the starting of the timber,' said I, and induced my wife to go back to her bed.

"Next day, so little did we think that Beatrice was in a serious condition, that we went off to make a call in Launceston. On our return I was sitting in the drawing-room, and my wife fetched the child, who was dressed, and took her down into the library. I heard a cry, and ran in, and found that the child had died on her mother's knee. Her coffin was carried down the staircase, as my wife had heard on the night before her death." (*Early Reminiscences*, by S. Baring-Gould, 1923.)¹

Similar stories might be cited *ad infinitum*, any one of which would be open to some objection or other.

Those who are convinced, as a result of personal experience, or by good testimony such as that offered in the Terriss case, that Precognition occurs in connection with tragedy, will probably be the first to agree that stories which are orally transmitted before being written down must be regarded with great reserve. Whatever value they may originally have had as evidence of that to which they purport to relate, they have lost much of it through not being written down in detail *at the time*; for even supporting witnesses do not help much if they too are trusting to their memories of events that happened five, ten, twenty or forty years before.

The most serious criticism, however, derives from the fact that many people have had dreams containing premonitions of misfortune or tragedy which they admit were never fulfilled, and it is probably true that these apparently unfulfilled premonitions are far more numerous than cases of tragic fulfilment.

But what is "fulfilment?"

It is here, in the meaning to be attached to this word, that the key to the whole situation is to be sought. Traditionally, as we have seen, precognitive experiences have been regard-

¹ Published by John Lane, London.

ed as above all premonitory of evil. The more the literature of the subject is read, the more obvious it becomes that most of the accounts have arisen not from impartial observation, but from the prior deliverance over to irrational beliefs, combined with the vanity of being associated with the weird and fearful. It is, then, easy to understand why so many earnest and truth-seeking enquirers have been repelled and confused by the subject.

Thus even the acute Abercrombie, in his *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers*, after citing a number of cases of Precognition, and acknowledging that a few of them were not explicable on any known principle, commented on the majority that—"Such coincidences derive their wonderful character from standing above and apart from those numerous instances in which such dreams take place without fulfilment."

The concluding words, "take place without fulfilment," show how Abercrombie (like his numerous modern successors) missed the truth because of an inherited misunderstanding. Those other cases of dreams supposed not to have been fulfilled were not given the kind of attention which could have revealed the sort of precognitive elements they might have contained, as distinct from the sensational prophecies which the dreamers wanted to find, in the hope of serving their personal ends. The investigators were influenced by the habit of expecting and looking for portents of tragic and extraordinary events.

What more attractive idea to poor mortals than to find out the date of one's own or somebody else's death, and so seek to circumvent destiny? And so we have this plenitude of genuine, doubtful and fantastic stories of premonitions of death and calamity, submerging the whole field of investigation, which rightly includes not only tragedy but comedy and triviality.

"It is of greater interest," said Frederic Myers, in the closing words of his great book, *Human Personality*, "to have a pedlar's visit foretold, if only that visit could not have been foreseen by any ordinary intelligence, than to have, say, a death foretold, if we suspect that that more impressive prophecy may have helped to work its own fulfilment."

The rational approach to our experiences is surely to examine them, not with a fixed idea of discovering something in accord with our wishes, fears or superstitious beliefs, but in the spirit of unprejudiced research. We leave on one side the word "premonition" with its unjustifiable implication of "warning;" and we continue to use the word "Precognition," which applies equally to the sensational and the commonplace.

We may then find, as the present writer has done, that dreams of tragic aspect, instead of being applicable to ourselves or to those personally known to us, relate usually to no more than what we are going to hear about complete strangers. Their importance to us lies not in the nature of the subject of the precognitive experience, but in the bare fact that Precognition has taken place.

An example occurred in the night of October 22-23, 1934, when I was living in my parents' house at Harrogate. In the evening I had been reading a chapter entitled "Psychological Mysteries of Sleep" in Brittan's *Man and His Relations*, a copy of which I had come across in one of the many antique shops in the town.

"During the night," records my diary, "I had a dream in which I thrust a man clean through the body with a spear with a single barb at the end. It was some kind of fishing harpoon I had seen in a shop window in Baker Street [when visiting London at the beginning of the month]. Subsequently in the dream I was a police inspector. In the evening papers to-day (23rd) is an account as follows:

INTRUDER KILLED BY SPEAR

A man who had broken into a bungalow at Hightown, a quiet country district four miles from Belfast, early to-day, was killed with a spear.

The occupier, Mr. William John G, who lived alone, was aroused by a noise, and, arming himself with a spear, went into the kitchen. Here he was confronted by a man who cried "Hands up!" and then made as if to strike him. There was a momentary struggle, and the intruder fell, the spear having penetrated his heart.

"Mr. G immediately notified the police, etc.¹

And this happened during the night when I was dreaming!"

The concluding remark shows that I was then thinking of Telepathy as an explanation. In the light of fuller experience I have little doubt that the dream was precognitive of the impression to be produced on me by the newspaper report. And it seems very likely that the occurrence of the dream was due to the interest I was taking in Brittan's book. At any rate, it is very remarkable that yet another relevant incident connected with the incidence of death happened on the same day (October 23, 1934) that I read the newspaper report just cited.

That morning I had particularly noticed above a wall-paper shop the name Rose & Co., a name which I had never consciously observed before, although I had frequently passed the shop. As, however, I had visited London at the beginning of the month largely for the purpose of seeing a Mr. Alfred Rose, a stranger who had written to me on a literary subject of mutual interest, it seemed quite obvious why the name over the shop should now impress me.

A few hours later I was talking to a garage man who startled me by remarking that a little boy named Rose had been killed in the town by a car during the morning. I was measurably impressed; but there was a sequel of a curious kind.

¹ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, October 23, 1934.

In a few days' time I ascertained from the inquest that the little boy's name was not Rose at all, but Marks. I could only ask myself whether my interest in the name Rose was a waking precognition of the *error* of my informant?

So it seemed. But three weeks later, on November 21, the Mr. Rose in London, an active man of 58, died suddenly of pneumonia. The news did not reach me for several months, and this may have something to do with the devious, though decided manner in which the precognitive faculty associated the name Rose with death.

It is evident from many cases that dreams about death can be precognitive, though the death has no direct bearing on the dreamer, his family or his friends. The evidence is completely destructive of popular ideas on this point, and the most ominous-seeming dream may relate to no more than a newspaper report the dreamer is going to see.

One night in February 1939 I dreamed that I saw a stone sarcophagus, which was opened by my Father to reveal the stone effigy of an ecclesiastic wearing a mitre. Two or three days later, on February 10, the death of the Pope was announced. His attack was quite sudden, and there had been no announcement of his being more ill than he had been for a year past. It is significant that the name Pope or *Papa* means Father.

On the night of June 1-2 in the same year I dreamed (to quote my diary) "that I took a watch of a very large size—about six times as big as the average—and submerged it under the water. This I thought was to clean it, and a number of pieces of dirt rose to the surface. Subsequently I took off the dial, and below it was a second and inferior dial of cardboard, but with the figures properly marked, and also having a short name stamped on it. This I took to be the name of the maker or 'tryer out' of the watch, for I at once knew that this subsid-

iary face was for 'trial' purposes, whatever that meant."

The next day the papers announced that the submarine *Thetis*, with over 80 men on board, was sunk in the bay off Birkenhead, and could not rise. Here was the parallel of a machine submerged, from which rose buoys (which the trapped men released as signals). The submarine was a new one out on a trial trip, and had engineers and technicians on board as well as the crew.¹

In May 1942 I had a most realistic and oppressive dream in which I thought I was in a house, and a rifle was fired at me, the bullet entering my neck.

I could feel myself going gradually paralysed, and I said to myself, "This is *it*." In fact the dream was so realistic that when my anxiety at length awakened me I was afraid to move for some moments in case I should find I could not!

The next day I read in the paper that on the previous day a soldier had been shot dead in a house in Hampstead. It was a week or two later that I discovered from another report that the bullet had entered just below the collar bone, which is not the neck, but the mention of which calls up an immediate image of the neck.

The death element can be present in a dream which is truly precognitive though the death element not only has no application to the dreamer, but is even more remote from him than a newspaper report. In New York, one night in 1948, I dreamed I was speeding along in a subway train. Far in the rear I could see a woman's body lying on the ground, and I endeavoured to stop the train by pulling the emergency cord, which, however, proved to be a mere piece of knotted string, and quite ineffective.

This sinister sounding dream was precognitive, but in a very harmless way. I was not then using the subway regularly,

¹ Only 4 out of a total of 102 men could be saved.

but the following day circumstances required me to make use of it. While in the station I was attracted by the cover of a magazine, and for that reason bought it. It so happened that on the train I did not have the opportunity to open the magazine; and then when I got home and had just sat down to do so, I was requested to tie something with a piece of string, which proved to be very knotty and inadequate. Finally, I opened the magazine to be confronted with an article, the first one, in which a woman's body lying on the ground was the opening incident.

I am sorry if I seem to deprive the freudian psychoanalyst of the significance of the woman's body, but whether I do so or not, the above recited simple happenings were the material of my anterior dream.

Such experiences show that Precognition apparently relating to death does not necessarily have a close relation to the reality of it. And when it is directly concerned with the reality, as it probably was in the case of Gwendoline Nelson, and in the case of Alfred Rose, the reality is more likely to be disguised than made evident. So was it disguised from Macbeth by the apparition:

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

Despite this, Macbeth was slain by Macduff, who had been "from his mother's womb untimely ripped," and therefore had not been "born" in the usual sense.

The ability to act on a Precognition so as to serve the interests of the percipient, not only in the matter of death but in other ways, would depend first on the inherent possibility of taking such action, and second on the power to answer these questions:

To what coming experience does the dream (or other form of Precognition) relate?

When will the experience take place?

In ancient times, throughout the middle ages, and up to the present day, diviners and seers have claimed a degree of power to give the answers, but it can hardly be said that they have established their claims. The ability even of those most prone to supernormal perception seems always to have been very much as Dr. Johnson stated it in the course of his acute discussion of the Second Sight of the Scottish islanders:

"Of things future I know not that there is any rule for determining the time between the Sight and the event . . . I do not find it to be true, as it is reported, that to the Second Sight nothing is presented but phantasms of evil. Good seems to have the same proportion in those visionary scenes as it obtains in real life . . . The foresight of the Seers is not always prescience: they are impressed with images, of which the event only shows them the meaning."¹

Thus Frederick Lane, despite the clarity of the dream recounted at the beginning of this chapter, had no idea Terriss would be killed.

On the other hand, in what is often referred to as the "classic" Perceval case, the percipient did have the impression of Perceval being killed. The case will bear repetition, although, unlike the Terriss case, it was not recorded in a way which makes it good evidence. Dr. Abercrombie related as follows:

"Through the kindness of an eminent medical friend in England, I have received the authentic particulars of this remarkable case, from the gentleman to whom the dream occurred. He resides in Cornwall, and, eight days before the murder was committed, dreamt that he was in the lobby of the House of Commons, and saw a small man enter, dressed in a blue coat and white waistcoat. Immediately after, he saw a man dressed in a brown coat with yellow basket metal buttons, draw a pistol from under his coat, and discharge it at the

¹ *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1775.

former, who instantly fell—the blood issuing from a wound a little below the left breast. He saw the murderer seized by some gentlemen who were present, and observed his countenance; and on asking who the gentleman was who had been shot, he was told it was the Chancellor. (Mr. Perceval was, at the time, Chancellor of the Exchequer.) He then awoke and mentioned the dream to his wife, who made light of it—but in the course of the night the dream occurred three times without the least variation in any of the circumstances. He was now so much impressed by it, that he felt much inclination to give notice to Mr. Perceval, but was dissuaded by some friends whom he consulted, who assured him he would only get himself treated as a fanatic. On the evening of the eighth day after, he received the account of the murder.¹ Being in London a short time after, he found in the print-shops a representation of the scene, and recognised in it the countenance and dress of the parties, the blood on Mr. Perceval's waistcoat, and the peculiar yellow basket buttons on Bellingham's [the murderer's] coat, precisely as he had seen them in his dream."²

Two comments are here required on this account. The first is to note that, despite the vividness and repetition of the dream, the dreamer took no effective steps to prevent the tragedy. To consult a friend in such a matter is to invite dissuasion. The second comment is to point out the further evidence which this well-known story contains (assuming it can be accepted as evidential at all) that Precognition does not relate directly to the event, since we are told at the conclusion that the dream was found to correspond to a coloured print. In much the same way, the modern dreamer often observes that a dream anticipates a newspaper photograph. Although

¹ Spencer Perceval, Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was assassinated on the 11th May, 1812.

² John Abercrombie, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers*, 9th ed., 1838, p. 285.

we are told that the dream corresponded "precisely" to the print, there is no reason to suppose that the print corresponded precisely to the event. It is very likely that it varied a good deal from the event.

There certainly do exist accounts of people who believe that they have avoided accidents or misfortunes as a result of a dreaming or waking Precognition. Without venturing to pronounce on them, I would point out that a belief so held may be due to a perfectly natural misunderstanding. The general characteristics of Extra-Sensory Perception suggest the view that a Precognition which is thought to relate to the experience of participating in an accident, has equal application to the experience of being in danger of the accident: the state of mind of a person in danger—or who hears that he has escaped danger—contains the elements requisite to compose a picture of the accident.

If a man had a Precognition of an experience x , and apparently did substitute for it experience y , then he would not have had a Precognition at all. The only Precognition that could have occurred would have been one relating to experience y . While it is obvious that the occurrence of Precognition has bearings of fundamental importance on the question of free-will, it suffices at this point to note that Precognition, properly speaking, can relate only to that of which whatever freedom of choice we have must have been made before the Precognition.

Akin to the supposed avoidance of accidents through Precognition is the belief or hope that Precognition can aid in "picking the winner" of a horse race, or other event.¹

To illustrate what is involved, suppose that A, B, and C. are three quite unconnected individuals among the thousands of people interested in a certain race. A has a dream which seems

¹ For some original accounts see Mary E. Monteith's *Book of True Dreams*, 1929.

to indicate that a horse called *Lively Girl* will win; B has a dream pointing to *Valour*; and C a dream indicating *Dawn*. In the event, *Valour* is the winner, and the two other horses are not even placed. B becomes an enthusiast for "prophetic" dreams, while A and C declare such dreams are nonsense, probably in pretty colourful language.

The dream of the successful backer may very well have related to the coming result of the race. It is entitled to be considered as an instance of possible Precognition, although the possibility must always be lessened when the subject is a public event about which innumerable people are speculating, and which is capable of a measure of scientific prediction. A Precognition relating to such a subject does not carry the same weight as a Precognition relating to an unexpected experience in an individual's life.

It is very far from being the case, however, that the dreams of the losers, A and C, are negative to the case for Precognition. They are negative only to the case for soothsaying in the betting ring.

For example, A's dream (let us suppose) consisted of seeing the words "*Lively Girl*" written on a piece of paper, or perhaps he saw a girl on a horse passing the winning post. Next day he happens to be turning over the pages of a book, and the word "*lively*" catches his eye. As a result, and perhaps quite unconsciously, a picture of *Lively Girl* winning the race flits across his mind. This little experience is what he precognised in the previous night's dream. That *Lively Girl* lost the race is no disproof of Precognition: it merely shows what an unwarrantable interpretation was put on the dream by the dreamer.

Again, assume that the other unlucky backer, C, had a dream which related to his future experience, and this time to some experience arising more directly out of the actual race. It is still the case that he had no sufficient reason—covetousness apart—to suppose that his dream related to the *winner* rather

than to any other horse, placed or unplaced. The name of the winner was certainly going to be prominently posted up on the field, and printed in the newspaper; and the experience of seeing one or both of these lay in the future of the dreamer; but the experience of seeing the names of the losers also lay in his unhappy future! The name of one of the losers was to attract his particular attention in some connection or other, and that was the experience precognised in his dream.

A precognitive dream, then, is not subservient to expectation, but expectation may lead to the misinterpretation of the precognitive dream. The Precognition relates to this or that coming experience, trivial more often than not. The dreamer, ignoring this, may leap to conclusions that accord with his wishes or his fears.

Why then is Precognition observed? It is possible that it passes into ordinary consciousness, not to confer a material advantage, but to demonstrate to the conscious self that the future is knowable, and that the whole truth does not lie within the compass of the physical sense organs. Thus William Hone, the Radical freethinker, began to change his views because he had a precognitive dream about a trivial matter, which materialism could not explain. But the dream *per se* was useless.¹

The disguised form in which Precognitions are experienced tends to support such a theory. Awareness that would influence the actions of the percipient has the appearance of being precluded by an intelligent purpose.

If Precognition, Telepathy, and Clairvoyance were exercised by the conscious man at pleasure it is obvious that the kind of life to which we are now accustomed would no longer be feasible. All decision tending to action might be countermanded as soon as conceived, owing to the disagreeable consequences which could be foreseen, or to the too vivid aware-

¹ F. W. Hackwood, *William Hone, his Life and Times*, 1912.

ness of the disapproval of others. So while one part of us may be desiring to exercise supernormal power, another may be rigidly controlling it.

The process or function behind Precognition and other forms of Extra-Sensory Perception may be constantly in action, an essential factor in life, and our occasional partial observation of its working may depend both on the will to make the observation and the concurrence of certain circumstances.

The function concerned seems, like some other functions, to be at once a part of human nature, and yet unsubject to conscious whims and wishes. Our ignorance of its use is part of our ignorance of the nature of existence, and therefore of what is, in the fullest sense, useful to this latter.

CHAPTER SIX

ARE ALL DREAMS PRECOGNITIVE?

NEITHER THE air-raids during the early part of the war, nor the rain of flying bombs and rockets which was falling on London in 1944 and 1945, had any observable effect on the nature of my dreams. The trivial and the unimportant continued to predominate.

I dreamed of the killing of a fly, but not of the little girl who told me that her best friend was dying in hospital, her lungs ruptured by the blast of a V2 rocket.

One summer evening I paused momentarily in front of a house near my own; a merry wedding party was in progress within. The young couple, someone told me, had succeeded in getting brief leave from the services to be married. Three hours after midnight I stood on the ruins of that house, while a woman screamed for her daughter. The young couple, at least, were got out unharmed. The bomb which had destroyed their house more or less destroyed twenty others, including my own. But of this I had no precognitive dream. During all that strange time when women shopped and children went to school amid the crack-crack of the guns or the sinister buzz-buzz of the flying bomb, I recorded but one dream of an explosion. That was on July 20, 1944, and it was followed in an hour or two by the roar of a detonating buzz-bomb, and the sight of the dust-covered body of a man being carried from his wrecked home which corresponded to the impressions of my dream.

But the frequency of precognitive dreams about the small matters of daily life has an interest equal to that of the rarer sensational dream. It indicates that we are dealing with something which does not comply with our weaker wishes by enabling us to avoid life's disagreeable episodes, something which applies itself equally to the good and the bad, the commonplace and the unusual, something which is innate in us, and yet has ways beyond our ken. Whatever control we may exercise over Precognition is one mercifully superior to our everyday frailty.

The case mentioned on p. 73, like many others, illustrates how a precognitive dream may be so built up of different elements from the coming experiences that it can easily escape identification, and be regarded as purely imaginary. The constant watch which I have kept on my dreams over more than twenty years has convinced me that Mr. J. W. Dunne was entirely right when he suggested, in *An Experiment with Time*, that precognitive dreams are of frequent occurrence, but that their nature may escape notice because of the way in which they are built up.

In this characteristic of being built up of different images from the future, so as to form a new picture, precognitive dreams resemble dreams apparently of the past, which rarely, if ever, reproduce in full detail a single past experience precisely as it happened. Another of the causes of precognitive dreams being overlooked is the fact that the precognitive images may be accompanied by recognisable images of the past, or may be composed of a rearrangement of such past images; and the dreamer's attention may be given, when he wakes, only to these past and immediately recognisable images.

The other day I began to read a novel by Zola, which opened with a scene in the French Chamber of Deputies. The following night I dreamed I saw a small box full of white

powder in front of me, and then, immediately after and a little to one side, a similar box full of brown powder. I understood that I had to vote by choosing one of these boxes. Even in the dream I reflected on the fantastic nature of such a method.

The following morning I picked up from the floor in the bathroom an old copy of the *New York Sun*—which had probably been put there by someone to cover a wet patch—and my eye fell immediately on this paragraph:

"In the Senate to-day snuffboxes are placed at the Senators' desks, and Copenhagen snuff is supplied them. The last Senator to snuff was the late Senator Overman of South Carolina, but tradition keeps the boxes in place."

Clearly my dream related to this coming reading, and the fact that the dream boxes were as large as and otherwise similar to the soap dishes in the bathroom where the reading took place, is further evidence of Precognition. Yet it is extremely likely that my previous reading about the French Chamber was responsible for the particular direction in which the precognitive faculty went.

The frequency of the precognitive element in dreams has more than once forced me to pose the question to myself, "Is it possible that all dreams are precognitive?"¹

The question may seem almost preposterous, and in any case might be answered instantly in the negative on the ground that a dream due, for example, to physical pressure, is self-evidently not precognitive. One night in an old London house I dreamed of trains rushing through tunnels, and awoke to hear mice running rapidly about in passages behind the partitions and under the floors.

There can be little doubt that the sound of the mice caused

¹ Abraham Lincoln is recorded to have "attributed a prophetic quality to all his dreams." See *American Imago*, June, 1940.

the *remembered* part of this dream, even though there might be held to exist a remote possibility that the dream was precognitive of what was afterwards heard by the ear. That *possibility* does exist; and, moreover, even in a dream due to physical pressure, precognitive images may occur, however much obscured by the physical circumstances.

When we dream we are back at school, experiencing the events of childhood, it certainly seems at first glance that there is nothing of the future in that part of the dream. Yet it may represent our future thoughts about the past. Something to-morrow is going to make us think of our schooldays, and our dream precognises the coming thoughts. Since observation shows that Precognition is the true explanation of many dreams ostensibly about what are called "imaginary" incidents, it would be unreasonable to rule out its possibility in dreams ostensibly about past history. No previous theory about dreams which ignores Precognition embodies any worthwhile argument to the contrary.

Nearly everyone has heard an account of Alfred Maury's dream¹ of his imaginary life at the time of the French Revolution, his trial, condemnation, and execution by the guillotine. At the fall of the knife Maury awoke, to find that a curtain pole above the bed had fallen on his neck. The usual explanation of this dream is that, even though it consisted of so many scenes, it was built up by the dreamer (perhaps backwards) in the one, two, three, or four seconds that elapsed between the pole striking him as he slept and his awakening to everyday consciousness; that is to say, that his startled mind built up the dream with extreme rapidity to explain the blow he had just received.²

¹ Told in his *Le Sommeil et les Rêves*, 1878.

² See, for example, the comment of P. D. Ouspensky in *A New Model of the Universe*, 1931.

In the light of precognitive dreams, however, I suggest that the probability is that he built up the dream *before* receiving the blow from the pole. It was his awareness that he was about to experience a blow that caused him to build up the dream in advance.

I fully realise that the opinion just put forward may be regarded as unwarrantable even by some of those who accept Precognition as a fact in a limited number of cases. None the less, I believe that if the reader of these pages will bear with me while I cite a few dreams less striking than some of those already given, it will become clearer why I suspect the presence of Precognition in, possibly, every dream. I emphasize "suspect," and I certainly do not assert that Precognition can, in fact, be traced in every dream. But I do say that there are indications that it might be so traced could the whole, instead of a small part, of every dream be recalled and fixed in the waking memory.

The enormous importance of this aspect of the subject deserves and requires concentrated attention to "border-line" material; but it will not be necessary here for me to invite that attention to more than half-a-dozen or so of the less obvious cases of Precognition.

One summer day towards the end of the reign of Queen Victoria, my father, then young and unmarried, was standing on a bridge which crosses the River Severn at Shrewsbury, when he saw that a man in a rowing boat below had missed his stroke, and fallen in the water. Regardless of his own life—and the lives of his posterity—my father dived from the bridge and swam to the man, who was unable to swim. A frightful life-and-death struggle ensued, but the rescue was completed successfully. The vellum testimonial of the Royal Humane Society, and the above few particulars constituted all I knew of an incident which might have prevented my

coming into existence—at least on a materialistic point of view. I had never visited Shrewsbury, never seen the River Severn, and had passed the whole of my life in another part of England.

In July, 1934, I found it necessary to travel from my home in Yorkshire to Stourbridge in Worcestershire, and while staying in that town on the night of the 22nd I dreamed that I rescued a girl who was drowning in a river, and she nearly drowned me. I particularly noticed that the water, which covered me all over, was a peculiar yellowish green colour, difficult to describe, but most unpleasant to be immersed in.

The following day, the 23rd, finding myself free to do as I wished, I consulted a timetable with a view to visiting Birmingham, but my eye caught the name Bewdley. I had heard someone say there was boating at Bewdley, and the idea of going out in a boat was sufficiently attractive to make me travel to Bewdley instead. Close to a beautiful bridge of three arches I saw a boating station, and went down to the water's edge. It was then that I had somewhat of a shock. The water which rolled at my feet was absolutely identical with that in my dream, and quite unlike any other river I had ever seen. The chilly feeling which came over me almost made me beat a retreat; however, I went out in the broadest boat I could see, and returned in safety, if not exactly with grace. When on my way back to the railway station I observed a board with the name "Severnside Gardens." Only then did I learn that the river I had been on was the Severn.

All the points in this dream, with one exception, can be referred to the working of the subconscious mind, which may have possessed geographical knowledge of the course of the River Severn of which consciously I was ignorant. The exception is the colour of the water, which was precognised in the dream, and which I had no normal means of knowing,

subconscious or other. This by no means excludes the possibility that the whole of the dream was precognitive of the next day's experiences.¹

How often do people have dreams similar to this one, which occurred to me on Sunday, December 11, 1938, without pausing to consider whether such "absurdities" are worth the least attention? I dreamed that I saw before me a white sheet, and sticking up above the edge, on the far side, was the face of Sir James . . . , very red and with a grin on it. Sir James was a well-known surgeon; he had, in reality, a healthy face, not at all red.

On the following morning my wife received a letter from my mother, in which she mentioned that John, my brother's boy, had had an attack of scarlet fever, and was in Ripon Hospital (200 miles distant from us). My mother had been to see him, but was allowed to look through a glass screen only.

Now in the dream Sir James evidently represented the idea of "hospital," for as a surgeon he spent half his time in hospitals. The red face betokened the nature of the illness. The grin represented the most characteristic feature of the boy John, while the sheet both represented the sheet of the bed out of which the boy's head was sticking, and also, by its vertical position, was an effort to represent the glass screen.

The following cases are extracted directly from my diary:

"Friday, February 15, 1939. I went to the British Museum during my lunch hour, and on my return, as I was by Tottenham Court Road Station, I saw a news placard: 'Girl Pushed Under Train at Tottenham Court Road.' I took a bus up the

¹ In a paper entitled "Des Rêves Ancestraux," included in the *Bulletins et Mémoires* of the Anthropological Society of Paris in 1900, M. Charles Letourneau suggested that such dreams may prove that memory is inheritable. He did not consider Extra-Sensory Perception. But in 1895 Mr. F. W. H. Myers had pointed out that dreams showing supernormal knowledge which are attributed to heredity have the same character as the far more numerous ones which cannot be so attributed. See *Proceedings*, S. P. R., xi, pp. 349-352

road to get to Marylebone Road, and on the way noticed the Rudge bicycle shop on my right with the window full of cycles and motorcycles. I thought I would not mind having a cycle or motorcycle again, but it would not be much fun in these crowded streets. I would have to go out further. While I was visualising myself in this manner an Indian (Hindu) who had entered the bus, sat down beside me. At this instant I recollected a dream I had two nights ago, i.e. the night of the 13th to 14th.

"On getting home I looked up my note of the dream, written on the following morning [sometimes at this period I made notes in bed in the dark the instant I had sufficient consciousness to do it]. This is it exactly:

" 'Electric generator on cycle used to murder somebody by shocking them through a gold ring.

" 'I rode a bicycle. In early times. Roads deserted comparatively, but modern surfaces. Then on foot. Desired more early times, whereupon a carriage and pair rolled round the corner. Met an Indian who saluted me.'

"Such was my note. The coinciding points between the dream and the Tottenham Court experience are: the Indian, cycling, a murder connected with electricity (electric train in one case, electric generator in the other). The gold ring has no corresponding element to-day; nor the carriage and pair, except perhaps that Tottenham Court Road at that end is associated in my mind with an old coaching station which once, I have been told, was situated there. Note also: the Indian in the dream saluted me with raised hand. The badge of the Rudge Cycle Co. is a raised *red* hand."

I may comment that my exclusion of the gold ring from the fulfilment was almost an excess of caution; for the girl being pushed under the train does suggest to anyone's mind

the idea of a broken love affair, and the association of ideas with an engagement or wedding ring is obvious.

"Tuesday, May 13, 1941. Papers announced that Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, landed on Saturday night in Scotland, apparently as a refugee.

"Ellen came into the room to tell me this while I was still in bed. I immediately recollected that I had dreamed vividly of a map of Scotland, or rather a large part of the north-eastern coast of Scotland. It had appeared in a sort of bluish-green colour, more blue than green, showing the mountains in a sort of relief effect. Towns, and roads just entering towns, were in red. But the remarkable feature of the map was the inclusion of a pipe running from the sea inland, and then bending south. I understood it to be a sewer pipe. It was part of the map, and coloured in the same way.

"The inclusion of the pipe puzzled me, and also Ellen, until I got hold of the *Daily Telegraph*, when I instantly saw the explanation. The Hess affair, of course, made the main heading, but immediately adjoining it was a view of the wrecked chamber of the Commons. In the right hand upper corner was a bent pipe, a gas or water pipe, corresponding in diameter to my 'sewer pipe.' It was also in the same position in the picture as mine on the map, though the course of mine was more regular.

"In this case again, as in so many others, there was nothing foretold beyond my own cognisance-to-be; that is, beyond my own experience in reading the paper a little later."

The ideas in the dream, such as that of the part of Scotland facing Germany, corresponded to my personal impressions at the time of receiving the news.

"Tuesday, August 12, 1941. This morning had a troubled nightmarish sort of dream about having a parcel stolen from

my bicycle [the war had revived the utility of an ancient machine], looking for it etc. Then came an incident of the kind I have come to know. A large cut-out paper wafer was before me—supposed to be on the missing parcel, or a second parcel, or a letter about them—no matter. It was, I felt, an official seal, the paper of it was white, but across it was embossed in dull red a number. This number I first read as 5399, but looking more closely I found it was 5379. The 7 was rather a smudged impression, but I made quite sure it was a seven, and memorised the whole number carefully. Immediately on waking I went over the number again, and speculated as to what it could refer: my previous dream having been rather ghoulish in parts I thought perhaps the number showed the date of my death, 5/3/79, and hoped it really was so distant a date! [See Chapter v for the prevalence of such ideas.]

“When I got up I found an official letter from the War Damage Commission, headed File No. 5A/2/7539. My number 5379 was evidently this in a transposed form.¹ I have had no communication from the War Damage Commission since a postcard in December last year, so the present letter was unexpected; moreover, the file number above is not on the postcard, and has not come to my notice before, as the postcard is the only communication I have had.

“It is interesting to note that the Commission’s letter is wrongly dated ‘11/6/4’, and an enclosure wrongly dated ‘11/9/41’—both should of course have been 11/8/41. [The month is placed second in British usage.] This may have been the reason why, on waking, I tried to turn my number into an abbreviated date, 5/3/79.”

“Saturday, August 14, 1943. The visits of Miss K. [an ac-

¹ Such transposition takes place when one has, for example, a brief view of a motor licence plate. “Several persons,” reported a newspaper, “said the plane’s licence number began NC-39.” The actual number was NC-3690-E.

quaintance with whom I had discussed Precognition] seem to inspire dreams, for last night I dreamed that I was asked by my 'landlady' somewhere or other [no such person existed] whether I minded sleeping in a room with books: a large bookshelf stood in the middle of the bedroom. Still asleep I told Miss K. this dream, though as yet there was no reason why I should do so.

"Just after I woke, the front door bell rang. As I was expecting a bag of Portland cement, I thrust some money and the keys of my desk into the pocket of my dressing gown, and hurried downstairs. It turned out to be the postwoman who had rung; she had a registered letter for one of my tenants. There was also a letter for me. I always take my letters into my study, or sometimes into the sitting room, but because I had money and keys in my pocket which I wanted to return to the bedroom, I went straight back there with the letter in my hand, sat down on the end of the bed, and opened it. It was from the Library of Congress, U.S.A., answering an enquiry I had made weeks ago. Here then was 'library' in the middle of the bedroom, in a position corresponding to that in which my dream bookcase had stood.

"In the present state of the mails, with censorship at both ends, etc., it is of course impossible to estimate the time in which a reply will come from America.

"Worthy of note: the postwoman, a buxom type, might correspond to the 'landlady.'"

"Saturday, November 4, 1944. Dreamed last night I was spraying some bugs on the wall, which had some of the plaster off as a result of war damage. As I sprayed, the bugs turned to fleas, much to my anxiety.

"In the morning I saw the following front page banner heading in the *Daily Express*, the words being in very large type:

B U D A P E S T F I G H T I N G :
' G O V E R N M E N T F L E E S '

"'Government Flees' is a comical phrase, calculated to attract anyone's attention, as it did mine. Preceding 'Flees' we have 'Pest Fighting,' and the divided word ^{bg}u. I have very little doubt that these were the ideas to which the previous night's dream related."

"Tuesday, October 23, 1945. Last night I had difficulty in getting to sleep, but at last I had a brief period of sleep from which I awoke after uttering—in the dream, not physically, I think—a strange note, the sound of 'mé' in the French word 'métro' [I was speaking French a good deal at this time.] The note, as I must call it, was a long drawn out 'm-a-y.'

"I then got up, and decided to read a book. I went over to the bookcase—I am sleeping in the studio on account of Ellen's cold—sat down in front of it, and eventually pulled out a book, volume 3 of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* [published about 1853]. This I opened at p. 276, and there my eye immediately fell on an account [new to me] of a girl who had had her night's rest constantly disturbed by a musician playing on his violin in the next room. Later, after an illness, the girl was removed to another house, when she startled the family by producing when asleep the sounds of a violin—'the most exquisite music.'"¹

"Saturday, December 1, 1945. Early this afternoon had an impulse to go down to Church Street market, Edgware Road, and there off a stall I bought for 3d *Lombard Street in Lent*, a collection of sermons by notable clergy of the C. of E., published in 1894, and dealing with social problems. It makes, surprising to relate, most intelligent reading, and the sentiments are, moreover, honest and outspoken. They are an

¹ The story was originally published in Abercrombie's *Intellectual Powers*, 1830.

absolute condemnation of the hideous social system.

"Last night I dreamed a collection of brochures was handed to me, supposed to contain the names of members of a Society (the above clergy were mostly members of the Christian Social Union), the earliest dated 1890. 'Before that,' remarked the librarian, 'you need not have them: they are doddering or in asylums.'

"My dream Society was something to do with 'Huguenots.' The preface to the book is dated from *Lollards' Tower*, Lambeth." [The Lollards were early English Protestants, persecuted like the Huguenots.]

"Sunday, October 12, 1947. Last night I dreamed I was in a room with Sandy H. [I was now in America, and this friend was in England], but to my amazement, on looking at him, I saw he had the face of a Negro.

"This morning, as I glanced through the *Times Magazine* (delivered at the house at least two hours after my dream) my eye caught a portrait of de Valera, whose facial resemblance to H. is very noticeable. On the opposite page was another portrait of de Valera, this time a *black silhouette*! [Under the silhouette the cartoonist added "Shape of Things to Stay" (alluding to the coming election), obviously a play on "Shape of Things to Come."]

"The Negro face of the dream H. had been impressed on me in a *sideways* position, as he went out of the room we were in.

"It is interesting to note that yesterday Mrs. Jones gave me a copy of a fiery Irish Nationalist newspaper. Yet observe the fact that I dreamed nothing of Ireland or the Irish. I dreamed of a very British Scotsman, whose real face and whose 'black' face constituted the link with two portraits in the article on de Valera which lay in my future."

"Monday, April 12, 1948. Last night I dreamed I saw a

very ordinary looking young man in a dark brown coat and black trousers. He was quite typical of the ordinary clerk in England. Yet he seemed to be in America, and an American woman spoke to him as 'Mr. —', the name I don't remember. I immediately corrected her, taking her very much aback by saying, "This is *Sir Gerald*." [I hope my dream self found this punctiliousness amusing!]

"To-day my eye caught the following paragraph in the press:

'ENGLISH CLERK GETS BARONETCY

Plymouth, England, April 11.

Richard , clerk in a petroleum office here, is now Sir Richard . . . Sir Richard, 44, succeeded to the baronetcy of his uncle etc.'

"The name Gerald had attracted my attention in another connection over the week-end, thus accounting for it. The other elements in the dream are accounted for by the impressions this paragraph was going to make on me."

The citation of such dreams, illustrating in varying degrees the faculty of Precognition, is necessary to enable us to form some idea of the frequency of its occurrence. There are dreams in which it is so marked as to catch the attention even of those not previously interested; there are others where it is so faint or so obscured as to call for keen observation and awareness of the problem to detect it at all.

A dream of a map of North America, with a strange river of lakes running across it, had its fulfilment in a few hours in a blot of ink falling on a sheet of paper and running across it like a river. The paper happened to bear the words "Heraldry in America."

Two simple experiences, selected from those which have happened to me here in New York during the past few months, will be my final illustrations of the view that the ap-

parently "past", and the apparently "fantastic" may in reality be precognitive.

I dreamed I was seated at a small table opposite to an English lady school teacher whom I had known in London. She was wearing a white blouse, and we were discussing some subject I cannot recall, but I knew very definitely that it was a subject that I should never have expected to discuss with that lady. The following day I received a 'phone call from a French lady, a complete stranger, who explained that she had kept an advertisement I had put in a language paper many months before, offering to exchange English for French conversation, and would I call at her hotel. I did so, and was astounded to find this lady in features and colouring the duplicate of the English acquaintance of whom I had dreamed. We went to a restaurant, and there the French lady, wearing a white blouse, was sitting opposite to me at a small table, while we discussed subjects which I had certainly never raised with the English schoolmistress. Thus the dream, so obviously of the past as I had at first concluded, related completely to the future

The other dream, the "fantastic" one, was that I was dealing on the 'phone with the affairs of the Indian Empire! Then I saw a girl sitting on a high stool, with a small number "42" tied to her forehead. This concoction was fulfilled the following morning by my receiving a 'phone call from a girl operator or clerk who asked me whether I was "Imperial . . ."—a number similar to my own. I had not till then any idea that there existed in America or elsewhere an exchange called "Imperial." The effect of hearing the word "Imperial" was automatically to remind me of the British Empire, and particularly of the erstwhile Indian Empire. The girl on the stool in the dream represented the girl operator, and the

number "42" tied on her forehead stood for the number similar to my own: my number includes "41".

And so it becomes apparent that our attention to dreams must be keen and watchful if we are ever to be in a position to answer the question, "Are All Dreams Precognitive?"

The true answer will not be based on dogmatic assertions that we *know* that such and such a dream related to the past. Perhaps it did; but the existence of past elements in a dream does not prove that it relates to the past any more than an architect's plan for a brick-built house relates to the clay pit. The closest observation of every experience which follows the dream is essential in order to reach a helpful conclusion.

Of course, it is not to be expected that anyone who is without conscious personal experience of a precognitive dream should even accept the fact that such dreams occur. Though large numbers of modern instances have been collected, many of them authenticated by the testimony of witnesses to the recording or recounting of the dream before its fulfilment,¹ it is unlikely that any amount of testimony will carry conviction where personal experience is lacking; I must confess that it would not do so to me. But it is useless to adopt a negative attitude so long as one has not taken the trouble to observe precisely what does occur. A precognitive dream cannot be expected to force itself on the attention of someone who is pre-determined not to look at it.

In order fairly to judge this primary question as to whether precognitive dreams do occur, as well as the secondary one of the frequency of their occurrence, a good course is to record one's dreams over a considerable period. The ideal is to write

¹ A collection of cases so authenticated was made for the London S.P.R. by Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh, and published under the title *Foreknowledge*. Similar work was done by Dame Edith Lyttelton in her *Some Cases of Prediction*. See List of Books, p. 199.

them down immediately after waking, but that is not practicable in every case. Evidence of fulfilment is most commonly observable within a few hours of waking.

Since most dreams are recollected only in a confused state, or not at all, disappointment will probably be felt at the outset. It is quite likely, judging from my own experience, that when ultimately precognitive dreams do begin to be observed, several will occur during quite a short period, such as a fortnight. They may even be observed on two or three nights in succession.

This difference in the quality of dreams has been noticed from the earliest recorded times. Thus Aristotle commented:

"He, however, is a judge of dreams according to the most consummate art, who is able to survey similitudes; for everyone is capable of forming a judgment of dreams which manifestly indicate future events. But I say similitudes, because phantasms occur in dreams similar to images in water . . . he is the best interpreter of dreams who can similarly discern the similitudes in these; for motion in these disturbs the clear perception of future events."¹

A number of percipients have remarked on the fact that the best examples of Precognition in sleep have taken the form of pictures of great clarity, even of a brilliant steadiness which the sleeper comes to know as specially indicative of Precognition. In such cases even the busiest men may feel impelled to record their experiences. Thus on May 30, 1863, Charles Dickens turned from his literary labours to write to a friend:

"Here is a curious case at first hand. On Thursday night in last week, being at my office here, I dreamed that I saw a lady in a red shawl with her back toward me (whom I supposed to be E.) On her turning round I found that I didn't know her,

¹ *The Treatises of Aristotle*, translated by Thomas Taylor, London, 1808.

and she said, 'I am Miss Napier.' All the time I was dressing next morning I thought, What a preposterous thing to have so very distinct a dream about nothing! and why Miss Napier? For I never heard of any Miss Napier. That same Friday night I read. After the reading, came into my retiring room Mary Boyle and her brother, and *the* lady in the red shawl, whom they present as 'Miss Napier.' These are all the circumstances exactly told."¹

Dreams at the other extreme are not usually brought back by striving after them. The effort to do so can be almost painful. But in between lies the great body of partly remembered dreams, and it is here that accuracy of observation and acute watchfulness are needed to recognise the likenesses or "similitudes," some of which may be obvious even to an external investigator, while others depend on knowledge peculiar to the dreamer, and which he alone can bring to the proper elucidation of his dream.

A man once dreamed that a carpenter's saw was pushed into the side of someone's body. After waking, he stretched himself in bed, but did so while turning the upper part of his body to the right to look at his watch. As a result of stretching while so twisted the man felt a long sharp pain down the left side of his abdomen—just where he had seen the dream saw pushed in. In this example, instead of the view that the dream showed Precognition of the pain, it is permissible to suppose that the dreamer may, unconsciously, have contrived to give himself the pain in order to "fulfil" his dream. Such are the "similitudes" for which the dreamer must watch, and such is the need to maintain a sceptical attitude until reason is satisfied one way or the other.

A comparison between a precognitive dream and a translation made by someone subject to various handicaps, such as

¹ John Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens*, 1874, iii, 181.

an imperfect knowledge of the language and a rigid censorship, is permissible: it indicates in familiar terms the degree of the difficulties constantly involved, but whose real nature remains shrouded in mystery.

One conclusion from these difficulties, however, is evident and important. A precognitive dream relates not only to the mental concepts which will arise immediately from the coming physical experience, but also to concepts suggested by the primary concepts—suggestions varying, of course, according to the individual contents of the mind of the person concerned. That part of the dream which is recalled may relate only to these secondary concepts.

For example, suppose that all I recollect from a previous night's dream is the picture of a battleship. At the time I am living in the country, far from the sea. But the next day I meet a naval man in uniform. This experience may be one which automatically suggests to *me* a battleship, a suggestion, however, which may hardly rise into consciousness.

Consequently such part of the dream as we happen to recall may be one which relates, not to concepts arising directly from the physical experience ahead, but to ones which will be suggested, perhaps almost imperceptibly and but momentarily, by succeeding concepts.

The frequency or otherwise of precognitive dreams should be judged with the foregoing consideration constantly in mind.

A late meal, beyond all doubt, contributes to the difficulties of clear observation of Precognition in dreams. Socrates, that great searcher into the mind of man, spoke as plainly as any modern could desire about the importance to the dreamer who wishes to apprehend "either something of what hath existed, or of what now exists, or what will exist hereafter" of avoiding the extremes both of abstinence and of gluttony,

so as not, in the latter case, to arouse that which "being filled with meats and drunkenness, frisks about, and pushing away sleep, wants to go and accomplish its practices." (*The Republic*, bk. 9, trans. by H. Spens).

Though we may be fortunate in a digestion of exceptional soundness, experience shows that in this matter, as in so much else, Socrates had reason.

As to the adverse effect of abstinence, that was charmingly implied by Monsieur de Mirbel in his little book on foreknowledge in dreams, published at Lyons in 1670, and entitled *Le Palais du Prince du Sommeil*. "Les songes," said he in his old unaccented French which a translation would only spoil, "demandent un sommeil gay, agreable, libre de tous soucis, tel est celuy qui se glise [glisse] dans un esprit qui quite les fonctions amoureuses, dont les preparations ne sont que douceurs, tendresses, & rejoüissances."

It may be added that any physical pressure, such as lying on one's hand, or under a heavy weight of clothes introduces into dreams a distorting influence. Elements belonging to future experience are still recognisable in such confused or nightmarish dreams, but it seems to be well established that freedom from care and freedom from physical disturbance are desirable conditions for the formation of a useful opinion on the question of Precognition in dreams. Such conditions cannot be said to induce precognitive dreams, but they do render them calmer and clearer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WAKING PRECOGNITION

BERKELEY SQUARE, London, is almost as well known to visiting Americans as Grosvenor Square.

The old houses still stand on three sides of the square, except for one at the corner of Davies Street which a bomb reduced to rubble. Many older historical memories cling round the survivors. Walpole died in one, Clive of India took his own life in another, Pitt resided for some time in a third. No. 50 is renowned as a haunted house, of which some hair-raising stories are told. But the fine 18th century iron railing, which surrounded the centre garden, went to make tanks in the grim time that followed the *débâcle* of Dunkirk; and even before the war the east side of the square was demolished to give place to a large block of offices called Berkeley House.

In this building, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, was installed the Ministry of Economic Warfare, in which I held a minor appointment connected with the disposition of Rumanian oil until the invasion of that country terminated her usefulness to the Allies.

On the morning of May 14, 1940, as I was going along one of the corridors of the Ministry, I was surprised to detect in the atmosphere a strong odour of antiseptic, such as one encounters when visiting a hospital. I gave but momentary attention to the matter, and at 12-30, the morning's duties

being completed, I quitted the building to go to lunch. After lunch I strolled along Oxford Street.

The traffic was very heavy, and as I crossed the corner of Duke Street, by Selfridge's, the conditions caused me (I now quote my diary) to "think of some little suburban man, thinking perhaps of his garden or a toy for his child, suddenly knocked down, his blood mingling with the tar, and perhaps his eyes crushed into his broken glasses. I thought how beastly, miserable and futile such things are."

These thoughts, which made a painful impression on me, had no other obvious cause than the sight of the traffic and the hot tar of the road.

But no sooner had I returned to my office in the Ministry building than the telephone rang, and picking up the instrument I froze with horror as an official informed me that the police had been there during my absence to inform me of an accident to my wife. She had been seriously injured, and I was requested to go at once to the hospital.

My wife's face, when I saw her, was terribly swollen, her nose was broken and full of blood, so that she had to breathe through the mouth. Her body was so bruised that the least movement in the cot was agonising. A light van, descending a hill in Hampstead (to which we had removed from Gloucester Place a few weeks earlier), had got out of control, mounted the sidewalk and run directly into my wife as she was returning from shopping. Happily, with the aid of an operation, she recovered completely from all the injuries.

The time of the accident was 12-50, which was about half an hour before I had the unpleasant mental picture in Oxford Street. Despite the fact that the event had preceded the Oxford Street part of the awareness. I have no hesitation at all in classifying this case as one of Precognition of the coming news and then seeing the condition of my wife. Reasons were

given when Precognition was defined (Chapted ii) for the view that Precognition relates, not to the event, but to our coming experience of it, whether by personal participation, or by the receipt of news.

This view is re-inforced by the experience of the odour of the hospital antiseptic at the Ministry in the morning, an odour met with again immediately upon entering the hospital in the afternoon. That odour, no doubt, was existing in the hospital all day. But my impression of it at the Ministry, before either the accident or the visit to the hospital, could have no *raison d'être* except as Precognition of the coming experience at the time of the visit.

Waking Precognition, of which the foregoing case is an example, is certainly of common occurrence. It came out in connection with the "tiki" in the case of Gwendoline Nelson, and at the very time when I was completing what I said on that subject, I observed another small but typical example.

Needing an envelope of a certain size, and not having a new one at hand, I took an old one addressed to myself and tried to turn it inside out, not very successfully. The next day I received a letter from a cousin, Robert G., written in Australia, which at once struck me as having a strangely rough exterior. On examining the envelope I was amused to observe inside the address, "Sir Robert etc." together with a cancelled postage stamp. In the interests of national economy the envelope had actually been reversed.

Everyone has observed, to a greater or less degree, comparable instances of Second Sight or Precognition, and it is scarcely necessary to remark that when they relate to the little things of life they are just as evidential as when they relate to something more important from a purely mundane point of view. Were I at liberty, as at present I am not, to recount the circumstances surrounding the sudden death of a former

Home Secretary whose office in the ministerial building was just over mine, it would be more sensational; but there is not necessarily any higher degree of proof of the supernatural in the sensational.

Monday, May 17, 1937 was a very hot day in Sussex, England, much too hot for my liking on the walk I was making from Crowborough back to London.

I had been invited to stay at C—— Hall, by two hospitable and widely travelled ladies. Their large house, built about 1890, had in its aspect something reassuring and reminiscent of the days before the blight of war fell on a heedless world. One half expected to encounter thereabout Sherlock Holmes, with Watson, and the inevitable pipe, an idea owing some inspiration to the fact that Conan Doyle lived and is buried a short distance away. One did meet some interesting people at C—— Hall, and on the Sunday night before my departure a long and lively discussion had taken place on various philosophies of life.

One of my hostesses accompanied me for a short distance, and then left me to what has always been to me one of life's greatest pleasures, to march at full liberty in the beauty of the English countryside, coming ever and anon upon some mellow relic of the past, an antique church or such houses as the fine half-timbered ones which held me a while at Lingfield.

The next day I wrote the following letter from London:

"My dear Miss J—,

"I strode on for 30 miles after leaving you, namely to Purley, and then took trams home. Splendid weather, wasn't it—but rather too hot for walking. . . .

"In view of the very interesting discussion we had on Sunday night, I think you would all like to know of a peculiar incident which occurred not long after I had set out. . . . When I said that I had solved a code in a dream,¹ and also

¹ See Chapter iii.

when I said that I had had dreams evidently resulting from telepathy, I think you all agreed, but I felt there was some doubt when I said that I had reason to think that the future could be foreseen in the same way. The thing that happened to me, of no importance in itself, was a definite instance of that.

"I was going down a long hill, at least half a mile long, with moors and trees on either side, and thinking about air raids and how to prevent them by bringing down the planes. This led me to think of the last war, and to suppose a German aviator leaping from his machine with a parachute and landing on this very moor. I wondered whether he could have escaped capture. I put myself in his place, imagining myself in a German uniform with wellington boots. I got very interested in my supposition, and imagined letting my beard grow, having no razor, and dirtying my uniform to conceal its colour etc. I felt that the only chance was to pretend to be some kind of tramp or beggar. So much for that.

"I reached the foot of the hill eventually, and rounded the corner. The road went over a little bridge, and on the other side was a house, with a big tree outside. The French tri-colour was sticking up from the top of the tree, and in the road, to my utter amazement, stood the unkempt figure which I had been picturing in my mind. I do not mean that he was wearing a German uniform; he was in fact wearing a British officer's jacket with the official buttons removed, but his trousers were in wellington boots, and on his head was a round peakless foraging cap, such as the Germans wore. His beard was overgrown, not cut into a proper beard but just neglected, and his whole appearance was dirty and trampish, though presumably he lived in the house.

"Here was perhaps the only figure in England which corresponded with what I thought I had been 'imagining,' but

which really I must conclude I had been seeing in advance. . ."

The French tricolour flying in the English countryside was something I had never seen before, and it remains a puzzle. There it was, however, and it combined with the extraordinary man to convey the impression of a scene from the first war.

A simple but very clear case of waking Precognition occurred to me in March, 1942. One afternoon, as I was sitting in a trolley bus travelling from Holloway Road to catch a train at Camden Town, for some reason or other I began to wonder whether bus workers have to pay fares when travelling in buses, and I concluded that probably they have to when not in uniform.

The next day I had to make precisely the same journey. At the same time to a minute or two, and at the same place on the route (it was by a request stop in the Camden Road) a man, woman and child left the bus. The man went round to the front of the bus, and spoke to the driver. At first I thought he had gone round to make a complaint, but I soon saw the two were joking together. When we resumed our journey, the conductor of the bus spoke to his driver through the partition behind the driver's seat, and from his delighted words it became clear to me that he had extracted full fares from a fellow-worker, and even "an 'arf for the kid."

A very odd incident, which tickled me enormously at the time, occurred in December, 1941. Ever since we had moved in April of the previous year to a house in Hampstead, I had, like other London householders, been considerably preoccupied by the question of bombs and counter-measures, for these were no longer the theoretical affair they had been in 1937. One of my activities had consisted in making an air-raid shelter in a part of the cellar which had not previously been cleared of its earth. The evacuated earth I had disposed

of in various ways, including the construction in the garden of a grassy mound. On the 23rd December I completed this little "mountain" as my neighbours termed it, by constructing a miniature path over it, and planting one or two small bushes on it. It then (says my diary) "occurred to me that I might make an arch on or near it. I considered how to do this, and decided that I ought to get a long thin iron rod which could be bent into a graceful curve."

The following day I got out my almost antique green Raleigh cycle, which the exigencies of war had brought into service again, and went to search the nearly empty lumber yards (or timber yards as we call them in England) for a piece of wood for some household purpose. My diary records:

"As I was coming back, a lorry ['truck' in U. S.] passed me from behind, loaded with hundreds of old iron rods such as I had been thinking of yesterday. As I looked, one of them fell off! Of course, I dismounted and picked it up. It was not really quite long enough; however, I felt it might do. A few hundred yards further on, I found the lorry had stopped, and the men had got out to adjust the rods, evidently not feeling very sure about their security.

"When I got up to them, I proffered the rod, which they waved aside. I then said, 'Have you got a larger one?'

" 'Yes, what size?'

" 'The longest you've got.'

"Out they pulled one about 12 feet long, and passed it to me, refusing any payment, and evidently regarding the matter as a good joke. Thus I was brought to be in the right place at the right moment to get my rod."

Such was my concluding comment, indicating that I was not then thinking of Precognition as an explanation in this case, but rather that my thought about an iron rod and wish for one, had caused me in some extremely subtle manner,

with the aid of Telepathy and Clairvoyance, to time my actions so as to bring me behind that lorry at just the right moment. But how, invoking Telepathy and Clairvoyance, and the utmost powers of subconscious calculation, could I have attained to the knowledge that the rods were so placed that a jolt would bring one off just when and where it did? Precognition fits the circumstances much better: the incident with the lorry was precognised the previous day in the form of the thought about the garden arch.

One evening, when about to set out to attend a lecture in French at a London college, I hesitated for a moment over what to take with me to read in the train. Eventually I slipped into my pocket *La Dernière Victoire*, by Richard Hillary, an English book translated into French which I had bought at Victoria Station when en route for Paris a few months before, but had never found the time to read, the literature of native authors proving more attractive. The Frenchman who gave the lecture which I attended made mention of one English book only, and that was the one which I had in my pocket.

Such minor—but meaningful—instances of waking Precognition crowd people's memories if not the pages of their diaries. Their importance to the study of Extra-Sensory Perception lies partly in their implication of a function which is constant though its observation is intermittent.

I now turn to a few waking incidents of more unusual character experienced by others, and which have come to my notice in various ways.

A charming Swedish young lady, who had been one of my pupils in London, and whose home in Malmö I subsequently visited, told me that when she was a child, she and the rest of her family all heard the grandfather enter the house, and take off his riding boots in the hall below, half an hour or so before the actual return took place. This phenomenon was ex-

perienced not once but many times. The name applied by my informant to such an experience was *varsel*, which seems to have as wide an application to the supernatural as "Second Sight."¹

It is, however, of great interest to note that in the neighbouring country of Norway there is a word, *vardögr*, which is applied specifically to the type of experience described by the Swedish girl. Sir William A. Craigie, the eminent philologist, in an article on *vardögr*, contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine* in March, 1912, thus defined it: "By this term is understood a certain property, attaching itself to particular persons, by which their arrival at a particular place, most frequently their own home, is announced beforehand by distinctive sounds, such as are usually or naturally made by the person in question."

Professor Craigie added that the evidence which he had obtained from Norwegians of high standing and education "leaves no doubt as to the reality of the phenomenon, however it is to be explained."

Such auditory anticipations may be contrasted with a story repeated by a German writer, F. Gurtis, who laid it to the account of Telepathy and coincidence:

"One of our party had just been amusing us with a story of this nature, relating to a friend of his student-days in Munich, one of those unlucky individuals who seem especially to suffer from the 'malice of inanimate objects.' He told us how, not long before, he himself was describing to some friends in his studio in Berlin various occurrences in which

¹ A Swedish encyclopedia thus defines *varsel*: "Mental experiences which appear to be a presage of future occurrences, or to be a witness to some contemporary or recent event which has not been cognized by any hitherto known forms of mental impressions. Varsel experiences can take the form of vague presentiments or true dreams or of hallucinations."

this unlucky fellow, (whom he had not then seen for over twelve years), had caused the Munich artist-circle immense amusement by the frequently ridiculous nature of the calamities which befell him. He ended up by saying: 'If he were to come into this studio now, he would be certain to seat himself upon that three-legged stool, and although it really is quite safe, he would be sure to sit down upon it in such a way that it would break to pieces under him.' Hardly had he uttered these words when there was a knock at the door, and his friend the unlucky individual entered—no one having the least idea of his even being in Berlin—seated himself upon the stool, which immediately collapsed under him."¹

Naturally the most sensational manner in which Precognition and other forms of Extra-Sensory Perception can manifest during the waking state is that of a visual hallucination.²

When visiting Washington in May, 1947, I picked up from my host's shelves a copy of *Coronation Commentary*, originally published in 1937, though somehow I had never happened to come upon a copy until that moment. The author of the book, Geoffrey Dennis, tells the following story of his boyhood, just before the Coronation, in 1902, of King Edward VII, who had succeeded to the throne at the death of his mother, Queen Victoria, on January 22, 1901:

"I was walking back from school, along Beech Grove. I had just crossed the road, and set foot on the edge of the Stray, to cut across the grass to *Victoria Avenue*, when an errand boy, basket on arm, appeared suddenly as though from nowhere. 'The King is ill,' he told me, 'the Coronation is put off,' and then vanished; though on the open Stray there was nowhere,

¹ F. Gurtis [Willebald Franke], *Voices From Another World*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923.

² The word "hallucination" is used here and elsewhere, not in its popular sense of "illusion," but in the sense given in the Glossary.

other than magical, he could have vanished to. Dazed by this apparition, this messenger for me alone, I stared in all directions. There was no errand boy, nobody within sight anywhere. I ran home, and there learnt that my mysterious messenger's information was true."¹

The local names in this story reveal to me that the incident happened at Harrogate, Yorkshire, where I lived for many years, and as a boy attended a school which lay in the same direction as the one from which Geoffrey Dennis was coming at the time of his experience—though from some strictures in another of Mr. Dennis's books I doubt whether they were identical. The "Stray" is a two-hundred acre grassy space, and I can confirm that it has no feature that could have hidden the errand boy. I can only conclude that the mind of Geoffrey Dennis created the picture of the boy as a means of expressing his subconscious Precognition of the coming news.

Before saying more on the subject of visual hallucination, I would like to direct attention to an additional precognitive aspect of this story of the days before the Coronation of King Edward VII. Thirty-five years later Mr. Dennis was to publish his book, originally intended to celebrate the expected Coronation of King Edward VIII. Obviously the author's boyhood experience may have lain consciously or unconsciously at the root of his inclination to write a book about a Coronation; but—and here is the point I wish to make—Mr. Dennis could not know when he began his book that the Coronation would have to be not indeed postponed, but, far worse, abandoned, causing a disappointment in the public mind even more profound than the grave illness of the earlier King Edward. The seriousness of the Abdication to the author of a book like Mr. Dennis's in which of course the personality of Edward VIII

¹ From *Coronation Commentary*, by Geoffrey Dennis. Copyright 1937 by William Heinemann.

figured largely, needs no emphasis. There is, therefore, a distinct possibility that the apparition or waking dream of 1902 contained, besides its immediate anticipation, an element that was precognitive of one part (the dilemma produced by the Abdication), as well as causative of another part (choice of the Coronation subject) of the author's experiences in connection with Edward VIII thirty-five years later.

Another boy, in the year 1900, had experienced a vivid dream which also was not to be fulfilled for over thirty years. He was Igor I. Sikorsky, who became famous as an aeronautical inventor, but as his experience does not come under the head of waking Precognition, I must refer the reader for details of it to Mr. Sikorsky's book, *The Story of the Winged S*, where in the opening pages he gives an impressive account of how this dream of 1900 was fulfilled while he was flying in 1931.

The period of time elapsing between the Precognition and the fulfilling experience varies in published cases from a few minutes to several years. Deeply interesting and valuable would be any records giving even a slight idea of the frequency of these latter cases.¹ It is only too evident, however, that as the length of time increases, and especially when it gets to periods like 31 or 36 years, any Precognitions that may have occurred are not likely to be retained in the memory, and are still less likely to have been recorded.

A Precognition which apparently related to an event which occurred no less than 84 years later was published by Matthew Habershon (1789-1852), a Yorkshireman who attained some distinction as an architect and a painter, and who wrote a book on the ancient half-timbered houses of England which gained

¹ For two examples, see pp. 123 and 127 of Dame Edith Lytton's *Our Superconscious Mind*.

him a gold medal from the King of Prussia. Yet his great interest in life was the study of the prophetic scriptures. It may be difficult to-day to grasp the intensity of the belief held by many earnest Evangelical Protestants at the beginning of the last century that the Old and New Testaments contained prophecies of paramount importance to the destiny of the human race. In particular, the Second Coming of Christ was believed at hand, together with the restoration of the Jews to Palestine; though this latter event was always assumed to be conditional upon their conversion to Christianity.

In pursuance of these views, Habershon published in 1834 a book entitled *An Historical Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures in the Old Testament*. I possess a copy of the third (1842) edition, inscribed by the author to his friend Charles Sabine, whose deep faith in the Second Advent was mentioned earlier. With one exception, all the interpretations put by Habershon on the scriptural prophecies were soon proved by events to be wrong.

The one exception was made in *complete unconsciousness of its real import*, and this spontaneity and disassociation from wish-fulfilment is a marked characteristic of Precognition as distinct from what is termed prophecy. Habershon's conscious efforts to interpret prophecy followed the lines of his own fixed desires, and were completely off the target; but the fact that his mind was bent in the direction of the future does seem to have drawn out of it one striking Precognition.

"If this reasoning be correct," he wrote, "then the year 602 or 601 B.C. is the point of time from which to date the loss of the throne by the house of David; and, consequently, after the lapse of the long period of 2,520 years, the year 1918 or 1919 after Christ will be the time when it will be again restored to its rightful owner."¹

¹ I first drew attention to this remarkable anticipation in the *Literary Guide* (London) in 1927.

At the beginning of his Chapter vii Habershon displayed "A.D. 1918 or 1919" in capital letters as the date of that tremendous event which was the keystone of the whole system in which he believed, namely, the "Restoration of the House of David to the Throne." He thought that Christ in person would then appear, the Jews return to Palestine, and the Millenium begin.

Everyone knows that General Allenby led his army into Jerusalem in December, 1917, that in the course of 1918 the Turks were finally driven out of Palestine, and that this event led to the beginning of the return of the Jews to the country. It may also be noted that the mainly British army engaged on the Allied side was actually fighting under the Cross; in fact, the Union Jack is the only flag of a great power which does embody the Cross, symbol to the Christian of the Son of David. Curious interpretations could thus be read into those historic events of thirty years ago; but the fascinating task of interpreting ambiguous prophecy is not my subject. What here does merit attention is the fact that in 1834 Habershon had an insight which led him prominently to display in his book the significant date A.D. 1918 OR 1919.¹ His mind was fixed on Jerusalem—he was to visit it in 1842 to arrange the erection of the Anglican cathedral—and it was also directed to the future. There emerged the date of a great event, though not so great or so "miraculous" an event as he wished and expected. His wish-prophecy was not only wrong as to preceding events, but obviously ignored the tragedies which since have befallen Jews and Palestinian Arabs. The Precognition of "1918-1919" stands alone.

If Extra-Sensory Perception could be said, beyond all question, to be the explanation of this case, it would be one of

¹ The prominence is greater in the edition of 1842.

special interest because Habershon did not himself live to learn of the conquest of Jerusalem. We may think of the possibility that he telepathically perceived the Precognition which existed in the minds of children living in 1834 who survived till 1918.

Returning to the subject of hallucinations, which was raised by Geoffrey Dennis's story, it need scarcely be said that the records of such appearances to people in the waking state are very numerous. Not a few of these apparitions, traditionally described as "ghosts," are attributed to Telepathy, though Precognition seems to cover the circumstances better. The coming experience (often the receipt of news of an event) is precognised by means of the apparently objective vision. Precognition is especially evident in cases where living and recognised people are seen in advance of their physical appearance.¹ This is well exemplified by the following account of an experience which happened to Dr. S. B. Brittan in 1850:

"I had been spending several days in the valley of the Naugatuck, and at the time was in Ansonia, at the residence of W. G. Creamer, some fifteen miles from Bridgeport, Connecticut. This strange phenomenon of the apparition of a living man occurred early in the morning. The sun had risen, and I was about leaving my sleeping apartment, when (after having my attention directed for a moment to the opposite side of the room) I suddenly turned toward the door, which was closed, and—to my great surprise—saw the late Joseph T. Bailey, of Philadelphia. He was standing about three feet from the door, and looking earnestly in my face, he addressed me, when a brief colloquy ensued.

"In his first audible words Mr. Bailey declared that he would call on me the next day; whereupon I enquired what

¹ See Gurney, Myers, and Podmore, *Phantasms of the Living*, 2 vols., 1886 and W. H. Salter, *Ghosts and Apparitions*, 1938.

was to be done on the occasion of his next visit. With an expression of peculiar interest, and speaking with increased emphasis, Mr. Bailey said, "Remember! I shall call on you to-morrow." I asked him to explain the object of his unexpected appearance, and to tell me what was to occur on the succeeding day. He gave me no answer; but the figure moved slowly as if it were about to disappear by the door. 'Stay, friend!' I exclaimed, 'Will you not explain the purpose of this mysterious visitation?' My friend made no direct reply, but commenced speaking in a low tone. I listened, and discovered that he was talking of a mutual friend, Mr. F—. Much that he said was inaudible, but I distinctly heard his last words, which were these: 'A dark cloud has settled down over the earthly destiny of that man.'

"The figure vanished as the last words were uttered, and I was left to muse alone on this strange experience. By a most singular train of circumstances, the author met Mr. Bailey the next day, in a car on the New York and New Haven Railroad. He had been in Boston the preceding day or two, and was there at the time his apparition entered my chamber in Ansonia. In the course of the interview that succeeded our actual meeting, Mr. Bailey spoke with much feeling concerning the misfortunes of our mutual friend, Mr. F—; and, strange as it may appear, when about to take leave of the writer, he uttered the precise words of the apparition: 'A dark cloud has settled down over the earthly destiny of that man.'"

Brittan was awake, yet his hallucinatory experience had the characteristics of a dream. Observe the evasiveness of the apparition representing Mr. F. "He gave me no answer," and "much that he said was inaudible." The same appearance of control was there which distinguishes a precognitive dream, and Brittan gave himself no information through his apparition that might have led—if such a thing is ever possible—to

his evading the coming experience. The value of his waking vision lay in its evidence to himself, in a vividly impressive form, of the faculty of Precognition.

In records in the English language, visual hallucinations are particularly associated with the Highlanders of Scotland; but, as was previously remarked, the literature of all nations testifies to the occurrence of these "waking dreams." The *Proceedings* of the S.P.R. and many of the books listed at the end of this work record cases so numerous and well attested that it is scarcely possible for anyone who closely peruses them to doubt that true hallucinations do occur, and not only to simple shepherds as they watch their flocks, but to people whose intelligence and judgment may (possibly) be thought more valuable by the standards of business and professional life.

It remains true, however, that greater importance must attach to Precognition manifesting itself in what is regarded as the ordinary course of events, unaccompanied by any auditory, visual, or other deviations from the customary appearance of things. The observer of this prosaic-seeming evidence has no need to wait for hallucinatory experiences which may come but rarely, or never, in his own life. And the conviction thus arrived at is naturally more decisive for him than that produced by the account of something more sensational which has happened to another person.

The significance of the everyday occurrence of Precognition may lie in some such direction as this: while it cannot be said that Precognition results in the percipient consciously altering his future experience, observation seems to show that impulses giving rise to thought and action in the present may be precognitive in source; they take their inspiration from a future experience. It is not the future experience that is in this way "altered" or made: rather is it that instead of seeming to be

made it has the air of contributing to the making of what goes before. For example, it obviously results in the recounting or writing down of a precognitive dream.

In this way, both the quiet meditation and the sudden impulses of a man, equally with the "absurd" remarks of a child, and the "fantastic" themes of a poet may in whole or part be the reflection of experiences to come, precognised in the deeps of the mind.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INCIDENT OF THE ARM

STORIES OF ghosts, apparitions and so on are a-plenty in the history of mankind, and at the close of the previous chapter some indication was given that these apparently objective visions should, as a rule, be regarded as subjective experiences, as a kind of waking dream.

The belief that such apparitions are separate entities, whose existence does not depend on the percipient, finds very scanty support when the full details are given by a trustworthy narrator like Dr. Brittan. Many of the most popular stories were not written down until years after the event, and have an air of sensationalism which makes them rightly suspect. True hallucinations have been tainted by the company of superstitious legends, and this partly explains why many people whose reasoning powers are strong manifest impatience if not disgust towards the whole subject of apparitions.

In face of this often too well founded scepticism, I do not find it easy to approach the sole instance in the whole of my experiences in which I saw apparently objectively, in broad daylight and while awake, something which looked material and yet, if material, was not material in any ordinary sense of the word.

A single instance of the kind, convincing as it may be to the one who experiences it, can have little value as evidence to others. On one of the occasions when that most engaging of

biographers, James Boswell of Auchinleck, desired to have Dr. Johnson's opinion on this subject, the sage replied, "A man who thinks he has seen an apparition, can only be convinced himself; his authority will not convince another; and his conviction, if rational, must be founded on being told something which cannot be known but by supernatural means."¹

Any experience depending on our only too fallible physical senses is essentially less convincing in its nature than a case of simple Precognition, for this latter contains in itself its own means of satisfying the reason whenever it is examined. Something seen, heard, touched, etc. for a few fleeting seconds is obviously in a weaker position, even to the percipient himself. Frequently, however, waking visions, like the dreams which they resemble, have themselves conveyed precognitive, clairvoyant, or telepathic awareness. The Brittan case, cited in the preceding chapter, was an example.²

It happens that my own visual experience was coupled with Precognition, and moreover it had the curious feature of being shared, in a certain degree, by my wife. Thus sustained, I summon up the resolution necessary to recount the incident.

It occurred on the morning of June 26, 1942.

"I woke up," records my diary, "at 7, as I know by the fact that I glanced at the alarm, which as usual was set for 7-15. I therefore dozed off again, lying half on my left side, and half on my back [a position from which I could not see my wife asleep in the adjoining bed, also with her back to me]. I remember the thought came to me that I would be more comfortable on my right side for a change, but I thought it was not worth while turning over for so short a time. I then had a dream of a very rambling character from which I was sud-

¹ *Life of Samuel Johnson*, at April 15, 1781.

² A selection of such cases from the records of the S.P.R., entitled *Ghosts and Apparitions*, was published by Mr. W. H. Salter in 1938.

denly awakened. Usually I awake without the alarm, which then rings some time later while I am awake.

"Occasionally, however, I am awakened by it ringing, and of course it awakens Ellen too. As she is nearest to it, she then touches the button on the top of it, which stops it ringing.

"Owing to the suddenness of my waking on this occasion, I assumed that the alarm had gone off, and that Ellen had stopped it. As, however, there was then no sound, I turned quickly over on to my right side to look at the clock.

"As I did so, I saw retiring from me towards Ellen, or rather saw whipped back with the rapidity of some furtive animal, a long thin arm—longer and thinner than any fleshly arm could be—a portion of which, terminating in a hand, remained for a second, poised in an upright position from the middle of Ellen's body, then shuddered and melted away.

"It was of a gelatine or jelly-like transparency, tinged along the edges with pink. A finger of the hand was pointing, and when the arm assumed the shortened upright position over the waist, I saw that the finger was crooked, not only forward but backwards at the tip, showing the elastic nature of the whole thing.

"Quick as my view was, it was long enough, especially when the arm paused over the body—almost as if to give me a good view—for me to reflect that I really was seeing a supernatural thing in broad daylight in my own room.

"I then looked at the clock, and saw that it was precisely at 7-15. Ellen, whose back was towards me in her bed, continued to lie still, breathing deeply, and it suddenly dawned on me that the alarm could not have gone off yet, that I had awakened either naturally or as a result of the arm. I sat up in bed, and shortly after this Ellen turned round.

"She said she could remember no alarm bell, and certainly had not stopped it. On hearing my experience, she exclaimed

that she had just had a dream which terminated in her pointing across a table to me, anxiously calling out to me to be careful how I handled some drawings I was looking at, though next minute she realised she was mistaken, and they were not in any danger.

"At 7-35 we took up the alarm clock to examine it. When the winding key was touched the alarm went off, although the clock was set at 7-15. It seems, therefore, that it had been prevented by some little thing, perhaps overwinding, from going off at the proper time.

"I told Ellen my dream, which seemed to have no connection whatever with the arm. The dream concluded with my being in the 'top flat' of a high building with a woman with dark red hair. She left me to go to get a 'paper.' For some reason she was to get it from F., whom I knew [20 years earlier] in the Bank at Harrogate, and who had red hair. I began to say to the woman, "You'll know him because he's got red hair like you,' but checked this tactless remark."

In the evening of the day which began with this extraordinary experience, I was walking along Finchley Road in Hampstead when I saw just in front of me a young woman in a pink dress, who stopped two children to ask the way to Hampstead Heath. As I was going in that direction it was almost inevitable that I should offer to guide the girl, and while walking along with her and conversing, I observed that she had dark-red hair under her hat. She told me that she was a probationer in the "Wrens,"¹ and was billeted in a large house in the neighborhood. Speaking of a practice air-raid alarm she commented humorously, "Unfortunately I sleep right at the top of the house!" When we parted, my new acquaintance remarked that she had soon to be back at the billet as it was her duty to

¹ Women's Royal Naval Service.

collect the "cards," adding in explanation that the word referred to the passes.

"Here then," says my diary, "are three distinct correspondences to the conclusion of my dream, namely:

<i>Dreaming</i>	<i>Waking</i>
Red-haired woman	Red-haired woman
Top flat	Top floor
Collect paper	Collect cards

"Moreover, almost the whole of my rambling dream had its correspondence in other circumstances of this encounter. It would be tedious to enumerate them all: besides, there is nothing new to me in these 'seeings before.' "

My own dream was then the ordinary precognitive one; but that of my wife, in which she stretched out an arm to protect drawings, and then withdrew it, is exceptionally interesting in the light of my seeing while awake a species of arm retire into her waist.

The only theory that we ventured to advance, and that very tentatively indeed, was that my wife precognised hearing about my encounter with the red-haired girl, and that the arm was an expression or symbol of momentary feminine jealousy. That view, of course, was based on the assumption that the arm was formed of some kind of matter.

It would be more in accord with other cases to suggest that while sleeping I was telepathically aware of my wife's dream of stretching out her arm, and that just after awaking this sub-conscious awareness presented itself to consciousness in the manner described.

The fact that the arm took on, not a clothed or natural flesh form, but a strange transparent elastic form may indicate the presence of some little known form of matter. That is a possibility which has to be considered in view of the experiments in what is called "materialisation" (see the authorities cited in the footnote to p. 185).

Thus Dr. Gustave Geley speaks of ectoplasm as being a white, grey, or black substance emanating from various parts of the human body. Most usually it is white, and sometimes it takes the form of "cords of various thicknesses" or "the form of narrow rigid rays." "The substance appears and disappears like lightning and is extraordinarily sensitive," but sometimes it moves slowly "with a creeping motion resembling a reptile." Although there are interesting resemblances, my experience did not correspond closely enough to the usual description of ectoplasm to justify the conclusion that the "arm" was objective in the same way.

In accordance with my custom of recording everything as soon as possible after the experience I made a full-size water-colour drawing of the "arm" to accompany my written record.

CHAPTER NINE

PRECOGNITION, CLAIRVOYANCE, AND TELEPATHY

IN THE year 1571, a worthy gentleman named William Slingsby, scion of an ancient house of Yorkshire squires, discovered the medicinal value of a certain spring oozing from a piece of wild moorland in his native county; and thus, in some measure, he came to be regarded as the founder of the now famous spa of Harrogate.

The moorland is to-day a grassy sward called "the Stray," and it may be recalled that it was while crossing this ground in 1902 that the schoolboy who in after years was to write *Coronation Commentary*, had a remarkable hallucinatory experience.

One day at the end of October, 1927, while I too was crossing the Stray, and while I was speculating in accordance with my archaeological bent on the history of the locality, the idea came into my mind that a street in the town ought to be named after Slingsby. Knowing, however, that a keen interest in the past is not shared by everyone, I kept the idea strictly to myself, merely turning it over in my mind during the next few days.

Now just at this time, to be precise on November 9, it chanced that my brother found he could not comply with an invitation to witness the conferment of the Honorary Freedom of Harrogate upon Admiral the Earl Jellicoe; and so it

fell to me to escort my brother's wife in his place. Otherwise I should not have been present.

When it came to the distinguished visitor's turn to respond to the addresses of the Councillors, he made the customary acknowledgements, praised the town, and proceeded to say that he had been told that the discoverer of the waters was one Mr. William Slingsby. At this point Lord Jellicoe made a pause, and then startled me by continuing, "I wonder whether there is any street or road in the town named in his honour—if not, I hope there soon will be."

In passing, I may mention that nobody else paid any attention to Lord Jellicoe's suggestion. I kept silent for nearly a year, and then made the proposition, which was adopted, that a path leading to the famous spring should be called "Slingsby Walk."

At the time of the original incident I felt that Telepathy with myself was the only possible explanation of Lord Jellicoe's remark. Longer experience requires me to consider the possibility that I precognised the coming experience of hearing the suggestion made.

Conversely, in considering cases of apparent Precognition, doubt often arises as to whether the circumstances, instead of being attributed to Precognition, ought not to be ascribed to the seemingly less mysterious faculties of Telepathy and Clairvoyance. This point received some attention at the close of Chapter ii, when the question of the definition of Precognition was tentatively discussed.

Firstly, it was emphasised that the occurrence of a number of cases where no explanation other than that of Precognition was conceivable, entitled Precognition to be considered on an equal footing with Clairvoyance and Telepathy in those other and more numerous cases which could be attributed to the supposedly "simpler" forms of Extra-Sensory Perception. Fur-

ther, it was pointed out that in some of these latter cases the presence of errors etc. peculiar to the percipient indicated that he had precognised his own coming sense perception and concepts arising therefrom, rather than that he had received telepathic information. It was also shown that objects presumed to be cognised by Clairvoyance frequently have no relation to the percipient except as part of a physical sense experience in his future. So that the form of Extra-Sensory Perception involved is at least as likely to be that derived from his future experience as from the existing object.

Before looking at a few more experiences in the light of these views, it may be useful to glance at definitions of the three principal forms of Extra-Sensory Perception, as they are at present considered to be:

Precognition. Perception or awareness, not attributable to information or rational inference, which corresponds to the future sense perception of the subject, or of another person.

Telepathy. The communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognised channels of sense (F. W. H. Myers, inventor of the word). Or, Extra-Sensory Perception of the mental activities of another person (*Journal of Parapsychology*, Duke Univ.)

Clairvoyance. Extra-Sensory Perception of objective events as distinguished from telepathic perception of the mental state of another person (*ibid.*)

The general tendency among writers and others in the recent past has been to assume Telepathy as an explanation whenever possible, in preference to Precognition. Consider, for example, the very common cases in which an individual starts suddenly to think of a friend, perhaps one he has not seen for years, and shortly afterwards he meets him round the corner, or receives a visit from him. As a rule, such an incident (when not attributed to chance) is attributed to Telepathy,

and that view may be the right one; but such an incident could also be attributed to Precognition: the subject had precognised his coming experience, the experience of meeting his friend. Or the anticipation may be attributed to Clairvoyance, the friend having been extra-sensorily perceived without any communication with his mind.

The doubt which surrounds the case for Telepathy as a ready label in ambiguous experiences becomes even stronger in the consideration of those other very common examples in which the subject begins to think of a friend, or dreams of him, and immediately afterwards receives a letter from that friend, a letter perhaps which has come from the other side of the world. It would not be very reasonable to suppose that the Telepathy comes into play only just before the letter arrives, for the minds of the two persons concerned are at the same distance apart throughout. A similar objection may apply to Clairvoyance, which is not usually held to depend on distance from the object clairvoyantly cognised. But Precognition, so far as present observation goes, is most commonly noticed a short time before the experience to which it relates; and this characteristic is extremely germane to the immediate question.

Thus reference to Telepathy is by no means an easy way out in cases which seem capable of a dual or triple interpretation. While a great many seem superficially to fall under the heading of Clairvoyance, the decisive establishment of the existence of the faculty of Precognition requires that in these and all other cases it should be taken into consideration.

At the same time, it seems to me unjustified on existing evidence to go to the other extreme, and to contend that all cases of Telepathy are cases of Precognition or Clairvoyance. A few appropriate incidents may be found to illustrate that Telepathy, as defined above, is entitled to be regarded as a distinct aspect of Extra-Sensory Perception.

Consider the extract from the diary of Shirley Brooks in 1870, which was quoted at the beginning of this book:

"Funny thing at the 'Bedford'—I looked in at the little window, and saw Helen writing in a book—her diary. She had marked one day, she showed me, with very black marks. Of course, she was mysterious about it, and she having denied that it concerned a 'he,' I said: 'Then you had your pocket picked.' Her eyes became saucers. 'How strange you should say that!' It was so, in an omnibus, and she had lost a good deal of money, and had told nobody. My fluke was prompted by a recollection of what happened to poor dear Emily, in New Inn days—she was robbed on her way to see me."

What is here described as a "fluke" may have been an instance of Telepathy, but it may equally well be contended that the girl's diary was clairvoyantly cognised by Brooks, and that he had no communication with the mind of Helen. As to Precognition, it seems here to be less probable than either of the other aspects of Extra-Sensory Perception. The second extract from Brooks's diary (p. 14) might be cited equally well to illustrate any one of the three faculties.

I go on sixty-four years to the morning of October 4, 1934, when I was travelling from Harrogate to London, my own diary tucked away in my bag, intending to stay with my aunt, who, incidentally, was the last member of the family who had personal memories of Brooks.

As the express sped through the flat Lincolnshire fields, I mused on my previous visit to my aunt, when she had give me a latch key to encourage me to enjoy the attractions of London; and the recollection of this key caused me to speculate on what my aunt would do if she lost her door key, how she would have to get a locksmith to open the door, and so forth. All this was, so far as I was aware, sheer imagination.

When in the early afternoon I reached the neighborhood of

my aunt's house, near Marble Arch, I saw her returning from the direction of the Park with her little dog. Embracing me, and kissing me on both cheeks, as elderly maiden aunts will do, she exclaimed, "I wish you'd come before. We've had a terrible time. I lost my key, and I was hoping you could do something. But at last I had to get a mechanic to open the door."

The lost key was not that of the front door, the one of which I had been thinking, but the key of the apartments my aunt reserved for herself on the ground floor. She had been bothering with the matter since 10-30 that morning.

In a case of this sort it is again not possible to decide absolutely whether the experience demonstrates Precognition or Telepathy. I incline to pronounce for Precognition as slightly more likely because of the error about the front door. The first statement by my aunt was that she had lost her key, without specifying, till some time later, which key. Thus I thought immediately of the front door, and it was the front door which figured in my apparent Precognition. If there had been direct Telepathy from my aunt's mind why should the front door come into the matter at all?

But there are some cases, like the one I shall now cite, to which the Telepathy label may be applied with the greater probability.

At the office, one day just before Christmas, 1936, a vivacious young Scots-Irish lady, Miss Margaret B., tackled me humorously with, "What are you going to give me for a Christmas present?" Later the same day I was in a shop where I observed a book with a white metal elephant on the cover, and I thought to myself that if I did give Margaret a present, that would be a suitable thing, but for the moment I took no action.

The next day I happened to take out of my pocket in front

of this girl a flexible steel tape, the end of which being defective, I had twisted round it a wire paper clip to prevent the tape running completely back into the case. The paper clip was simply twisted into a shapeless mass. Margaret caught sight of this, and remarked, "Whatever's that?" She bent forward, saw what the object was, and continued, "I thought it looked like one of those little elephants." Now nothing could have been more fantastic than to mistake a twisted wire paper clip for an elephant, yet that was the idea which had somehow come into the mind of this girl.

In the foregoing case to reject Telepathy in favour of Clairvoyance would indeed be possible, but would be going to a great extreme to avoid the probable. The probability does seem to be that the thought of the metal elephant had been perceived in my mind by Miss B., or, if the expression is preferred, had passed from my mind to hers.

A week or so later I had occasion to write a letter to a friend who was wintering at Mentone, and in the course of it I mentioned the above example of apparent Telepathy. About an hour after writing this letter I called on another lady, Miss Myra H., and led the conversation on to the general question of Telepathy and kindred matters, without, however, mentioning a word of the case I had just been writing about.

As it was the first time that I had raised the subject with Myra, I preferred to see whether she would volunteer any remarks of a relevant kind. Spontaneously, and in complete ignorance, I repeat, of the other case, she proceeded to tell me of this recent experience.

Myra had for a long while had the intention of sending a bottle of scent to a girl friend in the North by way of a Christmas gift. At the last moment, however, she changed her mind, and sent instead a box of cigarettes. In due course she received a letter of thanks from her friend, but, to Myra's intense sur-

prise, the friend commented that she was afraid that the people with whom she was staying must be dishonest, because she was "positive there was a bottle of scent with those cigarettes you sent me, but when I looked at the parcel again later it was gone."

How can we account for a case like this otherwise than on the assumption that the thought of the long-considered bottle of scent had been transferred to the distant friend, although the reality had not?

On October 2, 1938, when my wife and I were living in Gloucester Place, near Baker Street, we received a visit from one of my wife's American friends who had come over partly on holiday and partly to exercise her high journalistic talent. Our visitor had made the acquaintance of a young Englishman whom I will call Desmond D., and whom she then presented to us for the first time. Conversation ranged over many subjects—the big bargains obtainable at Macy's was one—and eventually touched on heraldry. It was not a dull sort of heraldry, for we were in a lively mood, and mentally I was recalling an incident which had occurred some six years earlier.

It was, to be exact, on February 21, 1932, that I was motor-ing in the Yorkshire countryside with a party of people. We passed a stately lodge gate, and one of my companions remarked that it belonged to the house and park of Sir Thomas Harris,¹ a prominent Leeds clothing manufacturer. "I wonder what his arms are," I observed, as the antiquary of the party. "Oh," said somebody, "they're sure to include a pair of trousers improper!"²

Now on this day in 1938 I had, as I have said, recalled this past incident to mind, and I was just about to recount it to D.

¹ A substitute name.

² "Proper," as an heraldic term, means that the object is shown in its natural colours, not conventional heraldic colours. "Improper," in this connection, is only a burlesque invention.

when he began to speak, and developed a similar idea for a false coat-of-arms for someone, involving "a dog improper."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "I was just going to tell you that it was once suggested that a certain baronet who is a clothing manufacturer should have a pair of trousers improper for a coat-of-arms!"

"It was not Sir Thomas Harris, was it?" queried D.

This second anticipation of my thoughts made me look at D. wide-eyed. I knew quite well that my companion of six years before had made up his little joke impromptu as we sped along the highway.

"No, I never heard that story of the trousers before," D. assured me when I demanded an explanation, "and I know nothing about Sir Thomas Harris, except that once I had occasion to speak to his brother on a matter of business. That was why it occurred to me to mention him when you spoke of a clothing manufacturer."

D. and I had never met before; Sir Thomas Harris was only a name to both of us; the coats-of-arms were imaginary. The case deserves to be classified as one of unqualified Telepathy.

That an aspect of Extra-Sensory Perception has the distinct characteristics which we term Telepathy I would be prepared to assert even if I had no other evidence of it than that obtainable with a good Spiritualist medium. My own dominant thoughts have been repeated by a medium almost as readily as though the medium were drawing on his memory of a conversation with me in the not very distant past, and I have observed similar interpretations made of the mental states of other people.

One day in April, 1937, I took a sceptical young French lady, now well-known in the diplomatic circles of her country, to a private séance in London. Her incredulity gave place to astonishment when the medium described to her in detail a

certain locality in Paris. It was not the Champs Elysées or the Rue de Rivoli or any other familiar tourist site, but an obscure spot which happened to occupy a specially important place in Mlle K.'s personal life.

Thousands of cases are on record of similar demonstrations of supernormal knowledge given by mediums or seers. Of course, all such demonstrations must be considered—and most emphatically are so considered here—without any predisposition in favour of the traditional beliefs which may lead the medium himself, in complete good faith, to ascribe the source to a deceased person, to an angel, to a fairy, or to a god.¹ Such beliefs cannot be kept out of trance utterances, and indeed they may help to induce in the percipient the state of mind in which telepathic or other supernormal perception more or less ceases to be inhibited.

For more than a century now some of the ablest and most alert minds in Europe and America have pondered over the truly grave problem of the provenance of these mediumistic utterances in which knowledge is shown which could not have been normally acquired. On the whole, opinion has not moved far in any direction from the careful conclusion arrived at in 1853 by Augustus De Morgan, professor of mathematics at University College, London (and author of *Formal Logic*, as well as numerous works on the differential calculus, the theory of probabilities, and kindred subjects). After investigating the phenomena of Mrs. Hayden, the American medium, Professor De Morgan wrote to the Rev. W. Heald that he

¹ All the evidence in this (or any other book on Extra-Sensory Perception) points in the direction of the spiritual nature of man, but I am not here concerned with discussion of the kind or degree of evidence that would prove spirit survival as commonly envisaged or otherwise. For a balanced commentary on the present situation of psychical research in this regard, see an article by Professor J. B. Rhine in the April, 1949, issue of the *Journal of the American S. P. R.*

was "perfectly satisfied that something, or somebody, or some spirit was reading *my thoughts*."¹

When the remotest possibility of the medium having acquired his information by normal means has been ruled out, and when the information exists in the mind of a sitter, then telepathic awareness of that sitter's mind is indicated. In the case first cited above, Mlle K. was a complete stranger to all present except myself, and I had known her only in London. Of her home life in Paris I knew nothing at that time. Hence her own mind was the only one from which the medium could have drawn the description which so surprised her.

Another form of Telepathy for which there is as decisive, though less widely known, evidence is the dream in which images are presented to the sleeper which originate in the experiences of another person, whence such dreams are termed telepathic dreams. "No objective investigator can doubt any longer their occurrence or validity," declared the well-known psychotherapist, Dr. Wilhelm Stekel,² who is said to have analysed more dreams than any other practitioner in the world. Particularly interesting is the double telepathic dream in which the same images are experienced by two people during the same period of sleep. The recent cases recorded by Dr. Nandor Fodor in *The American Imago*, August, 1942, and by Bernard J. Duffy in his *Food for Thought*, 1944, may be mentioned in this connection. Married couples are among those best situated to observe the incidence of these telepathic dreams, and possibly are particularly liable to them; in much the same way as they find that a headache or feeling of depression may coincide with the illness or misfortune of the partner, even when this is not known by normal means.

A similar interaction between the minds of twins has been

¹ Mrs. De Morgan, *Memoir of Augustus De Morgan*, 1882, p. 221.

² In *Der telepathische Traum*, 1922.

remarked by many investigators.¹ Striking accounts exist of corresponding thoughts and actions on the part of twins (especially, it is suggested, "one-egg" or identical twins) while they have been widely separated in space. It has yet to be shown, however, that the special relationship between twins is the cause of a greater degree of telepathic awareness between them than exists between other relations, or between people who know each other well.

The performance of corresponding actions by two people is one of the most deeply interesting aspects of what we call Extra-Sensory Perception, one which is much less readily labelled telepathic than a thought or dream in common.

In the afternoon of October 1, 1941, I happened to have no particular duties to perform, and welcomed the opportunity to take a walk. Finally, I strolled into the Public Library at Golders Green. Here I glanced at one or two books of reference, and then picked up a newspaper which was lying on a table. Underneath the newspaper was a book—Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Never having seen this work before, I seized the opportunity, sat down, and spent a considerable time reading the book.

The following day, in a telephone conversation with one of our friends, Miss P. M. P., I learned that this lady had been reading *Mein Kampf* in her home several miles away just before 4 o'clock (the time I entered the Library), and that coming upon certain passages which she believed would interest me, she said to herself, "W. (myself) ought to read this!"

Could Telepathy bring about the requisite circumstances for Miss P. M. P. and I to act as we did? My concern with this problem may have had something to do with the fact that on

¹ See *Journal of the American S.P.R.*, xliii, 109 for references to some of these.

the next day, October 2, another and more remarkable case of this double action occurred.

"About 6 o'clock in the evening," records my diary at the above date, "I came to a sudden decision to remove our railings." These cast-iron, supposedly decorative railings stood on a low brick wall between my front garden and the road, an arrangement very common in England. I thoroughly disapproved of the particular example of Victorian taste which I had, and for some time it had been in my mind to do away with it, and give the metal for war purposes.

On this particular evening I came to the "sudden decision" to act. Well do I remember the suddenness of it, and how I seized a hammer and proceeded to make such a din in demolishing the ironwork that the neighbouring air-raid wardens dashed out, believing enemy action was in progress. I found that the brick wall was very powdery, and the danger of it collapsing occurred to me.

Four days later (October 6) I received a letter from my parents in Yorkshire, informing me that on October 2 my sister had gone out gathering blackberries for jam-making, in company with some friends. My sister was standing on a wall, reaching for some berries, when it collapsed. She fell with it, and rather severely bruised and cut her face. At the earliest suitable opportunity I requested my sister to give me the time of her accident. She replied that if she had to name a time she would say 6.5, but she could not undertake to speak with exactitude. It is therefore not possible to say whether my "sudden decision" of "about 6 o'clock" preceded or followed the accident, or was simultaneous.

Whatever form of Extra-Sensory Perception was concerned, the first point of significance is that it expressed itself not in a simple thought, not in a dream, but in simultaneous, or ap-

proximately simultaneous, *action*. In both the cases just cited it is possible to conceive that one party was inspired to act by the other—that Miss P. M. P. did not read her copy of *Mein Kampf* first but only as a result of Extra-Sensory Perception of what I was doing or thinking in the Golders Green Library; and that my action on the railings and wall resulted from a like perception of my sister's accident.

Such a possibility that the actions of daily life are extra-sensorily interdependent must give us pause.

Cases of double action, however, sometimes occur in circumstances in which it is *prima facie* inconceivable that either party could be acting in immediate response to the other, because the circumstances seem entirely outside the control of either of them. Two or three quotations from my diary, such as may be paralleled in the memories of nearly everyone, may be borne with by way of illustration.

"Thursday, July 19, 1945. On Tuesday I received from Seaby's [London coin dealers], among others I had selected from their catalogue, a coin of William the Conqueror, made at Northampton by one Sepine. On the bus this morning Mrs.—[an acquaintance I knew so little I was and still am ignorant of her name] remarked, "I was in Northampton at the weekend and saw something that would have interested you: a lot of coins in a shop window." Nothing had been previously said about my purchase. The lady merely knew, from an earlier conversation, that I was a coin collector.

Had this lady merely made reference to "Northampton" and to "coins," that would have been quite noteworthy; but they were no mere passing thoughts that were involved: she had actually been to the town of Northampton and there remarked some antique coins. On my side my reason for buying the particular coin I did was that it was made by a moneyer called

Sepine, a name resembling my own. My accounts show that I ordered the coin from the dealers during the week-end when the lady made her observation in Northampton.

"Wednesday, January 23, 1946. Yesterday I had promised a girl at—[a private school in Mayfair, London] some small coins for her bracelet. I had them in a little envelope in my pocket, ready for her, when the girl entered the classroom breathless, and asked me if she could go back to Selfridge's [store] as she had left her bag there with her money in it. I had just been on the point of producing my little 'bag' with money in it for her.

"Are such 'coincidences' unconnected by the thoughts of the parties concerned, and are they to be explained in some other and yet more mysterious way?

"For example, I have for some days been reading a French novel about a sorcerer who rips open a woman to get at the child in her womb. Last night [with this book in my overcoat pocket] while sitting on the platform at . . . Station with Mary and Cynthia [students of an evening institute where also I was teaching], who generally go home in the same carriage with me, I noticed that Cynthia was reading a novel very intently. She refused to let me see the title at first; when eventually I got close enough, I saw it was *Jane the Ripper*. Cynthia said that according to this story the 'Ripper' [the historic murderer, 'Jack the Ripper'] was a woman disguised as a man."

A line of reasoning by which such instances could be attributed to Telepathy would be in supposing the influence of *anterior* Telepathy as distinct from immediate Telepathy. In other words, a mutual sympathy or inter-relation having been telepathically created, there may ensue a degree of community of ideas; and by continuing mental processes, which must include Clairvoyance and Precognition, the persons concerned arrive simultaneously at actions or expressions whose resem-

blance is striking, though the immediately preceding causes have the appearance of being quite unconnected one with the other.

One particularly curious experience, which seems to fall under this head, happened to me in New York in 1948, shortly after I had discovered (as recounted in Chapter iii) that the 1927 dream in which I solved a masonic code had occurred on the anniversary of Poe's death.

During the course of a visit to the New York Public Library on Friday, August 6, 1948, I happened upon a room which contained an anniversary exhibition of books published in 1648, 1748, and 1848; and there I saw lying in one of the glass cases a copy of the original edition of a little work published by Poe in 1848, under the title of *Eureka*. The existence of this work was previously unknown to me. The Library copy—Poe's own annotated copy—was shown open at the Preface, in which the author declares that dreams are the "only realities."

On referring to a less precious copy of this extremely unorthodox¹ cosmological treatise, I was amused to observe that in advance defiance of public opinion Poe declared that, if need be, he could wait 100 years for a reader; so that the anniversary exhibition arranged by the Public Library was singularly, if unconsciously, appropriate to Poe's sentiment! I observed also an assertion that the cryptologist solves a cryptogram not so much by reasoning as by intuition.

Three days later, when seeking for information about the little-known *Eureka*, I read in the *Encyclopedia Americana* that Poe, as a child, spent two years at a school called the Manor House, in Stoke Newington, near London. The name "Manor House" interested me a good deal more than *Eureka*. In fact it was a kind of revelation to me: during a period of over two years I had worked within a few hundred yards of the Stoke

¹ "Each soul is, in part, its own God—its own Creator."

Newington Manor House without realising that it stands on the site of the school in which Poe passed an important period of his childhood. The encyclopedia proceeded to inform my surprised, not to say humiliated, self that in his story *William Wilson* Poe had described the Manor House school and its neighborhood in some detail.

The first thing I did on reaching home was to get out my old copy of Poe's *Tales*, and, for the first time in twenty years or so, re-read the story *William Wilson*. Mainly it turns on coincidence of names, dates, and events (a favourite theme of Poe's, and one doubtless inspired by his own experience of the supernatural). William Wilson is a boy at the old Manor House school. He finds himself dogged by another William Wilson, who resembles him physically, and who was even born on the same date. Wilson is infuriated by the way the double keeps mimicking him.

On the morning after this reading of *William Wilson*, I got into the United Nations' bus on Hillside Avenue, Jamaica, to attend a session of the Security Council at Lake Success. I had arranged to meet a friend, who failed to turn up at the starting place. Instead, there came and sat down beside me a distinguished looking gentleman with white hair. After a few moments he opened a conversation which, as he smilingly reminded me when he realised my nationality, I would probably never have initiated myself.

He announced to me that his name was Wilson, and in the course of further conversation he referred to "an old manor house" at which he had stayed in England; and he told me that a member of his immediate family and household was a kind of unconscious mimic of others, quickly acquiring their mannerisms and so on.

All this was told to me without my having said a word about my experiences.

Somewhere it has been remarked that if, in any public place, a man pulls out his watch to consult it, several other men may often be seen automatically to follow his example. These actions too are "coincidences," ones which depend on the prior understanding that pockets and watches are desirable and consequently available. If for this "normal" community of ideas we substitute a "supernormal" one, a "sympathy from afar," we may be proceeding towards the elucidation of cases of double action Telepathy.

Aside from Telepathy, the possibility may be entertained in such cases that Precognition by A of his coming experience of the situation of B leads A on to a situation of a coincidental character. Thus, in the case last quoted, the train of events leading up to the reading of *William Wilson* has an air of purpose when looked at retrospectively, and this purpose may have been the providing of a correspondence with the actual encounter with Mr. Wilson, already precognised in the unconscious mind. As this involves supposing that part of A's future is determined, while his subliminal mind plots the rest (the coincidence), it may be thought that the purely telepathic theory is more consistent. In any case secret mental processes are indicated, as complex as they are startling.

A simple experiment can be just as startling. Closing my eyes, and acting with precipitation so as to eliminate reasoning, I seize off the shelves the first book which my hand touches, open it, jab my finger on a page, and then—and then only—open my eyes to find the finger-nail is immediately under this line, "*La Demoiselle au Chat d'Or.*" Replacing the book, and again shutting my eyes, I repeat the process with the same unthinking rapidity. This time, on opening my eyes, I find myself in possession of a larger book, and my finger is on a map. It is a map of the "*Côte d'Or,*" and my finger-nail is just under the *left-hand* end of the name "*Chatillonnais.*"

The outstanding feature of this kind of experiment (which can be performed with a collection of books never seen before) is that the sentence or name which is pointed to reflects the dominant thoughts of the percipient. In the above example the dominant thought in the first book trial was repeated in the second trial as closely as the limitations of the material available within reach of my arm would allow. "Clairvoyance" is an "explanation" which presents itself readily enough, one which requires us to explain also the undeniable resemblance between the result of such an experiment and the coincidences of daily life. Are we to assume that persons can be picked out in the same way as a phrase in a book, or as a playing card? What confronts us is not only evidence of the supernormal processes of the individual mind, but evidence of a correlation between minds on the supernormal plane of which the experiences of conscious everyday life are a manifestation.

The evidence for supernormal mind processes which we possess might be enlarged in a very illuminating way could we observe these processes as they extend over periods of years and over lifetimes. Unfortunately, in the nature of things, we cannot have the detailed information which is possible in the case of a coincidence in which the two events fall so near together as to challenge immediate observation, comparison, and recording.

Sometimes a half-glimpse is obtained through historic events. It is noticeable that for four generations the descendants of Queen Victoria on the British throne had a normally inexplicable correspondence in many family and other respects to the Stuart sovereigns immediately descending from Mary Queen of Scots. Queen Victoria's devotion to the Highlands may have had some bearing on this parallel, one which those sufficiently immersed in British history, royal genealogy, and numismatics may find it interesting to study.

But no records can approach in value as evidence of the

supernormal an individual's observation of occurrences in his own life when it has been possible for a full and detailed picture of what is experienced to be recorded.

To cite further cases illustrating special or general aspects of the Precognition-Clairvoyance-Telepathy problem would but demonstrate anew that the vague attribution of everything to "thought transference" is useless. Yet though such facile phrases may be dismissed, it is evidently not the case that a satisfactory sub-division can be made. If a certain number can be attributed to one or other of the three labels in use, the rest elude such classification. We are left with a feeling that an element is present for which conscious reason can find no analogy.

On one point something can be said. Evidence both spontaneous and experimental is tending to indicate that the separation of Telepathy from Clairvoyance may be artificial. Definitions state, or imply, that Telepathy is Extra-Sensory Perception of a thought, and that Clairvoyance is Extra-Sensory Perception of a thing. That is a manner of speaking based upon physical sense experience. There is the possibility that for the process behind Extra-Sensory Perception a thought may be perceptible in much the same way as a thing. On this view Telepathy and Clairvoyance may represent one and the same process: a reaching out of the mind to perceive thoughts and things not perceptible by the physical senses.

Possible Periodicity of Extra-Sensory Perception

A noticeable number of the experiences mentioned in this chapter occurred in the month of October, and when I noticed this I carried out an investigation the result of which is decidedly curious, and may prove to be of value.

My diary shows that from 1927 to 1947 inclusive I recorded

210 experiences coming under the head of Extra-Sensory Perception.

During the early part of this period of twenty-one years I was far from being sufficiently active and attentive to record everything which merited it; and even later on I omitted to record numerous cases which I thought had no distinctive features. Likewise I failed to record some cases which were so involved and complex that my pen shunned the task of describing them. All diarists have these moments of rebellion, and my original object in keeping a diary was not to record the supernormal.

From the mere total of 210 therefore nothing can be deduced. But when the total is divided among the different months, according to the dates when the cases occurred, there is an appearance of annual periodicity. The following are the figures:

January	15	July	12
February	13	August	23
March	15	September	21
April	17	October	31
May	17	November	18
June	15	December	13

From what was said above it will be understood that the 15 cases ascribed to January were distributed over 21 Januarys, so that the average for each January was less than 1. And the same applies to the other months.

It may be noticed that while there is a certain consistency, a total of about 15 for the winter, spring, and summer months, a marked rise occurs in August, September, and October. The latter month, with 31, is easily the record one. An examination of the actual dates seems to indicate that the beginning of October is the peak period.

If this apparent periodicity is personal to me, I can give no

explanation of it, and whether a similar or any periodicity exists for other people remains to be discovered.¹ Only the classical writers—such as Aristotle and Democritus—have mentioned this point, and they, contrary to my experience, describe the autumn as the *worst* season for “prophetic” dreams. One may surmise that in ancient times there was much eating up of perishable foods in the autumn, with adverse effects on the clarity of dreams.

Unfortunately, examination of recorded cases, even those of the S. P. R., does not help towards comparative statistics. Most of the accounts are extremely vague about dates, being referred to the year only, or even to “a few years ago,” “many years ago,” etc.

This is the more regrettable because the establishment of periodicity of any kind for Extra-Sensory Perception would help towards the solution of the problem of the nature of the process which is involved.

The ideal would be to have a complete life record of an individual's mental impressions and actions. We might then have before us, not merely a greater or less number of separate instances of Precognition, Telepathy, and Clairvoyance, but we should be able to compile statistics revealing any periodicity which there might be. Besides the apparent annual form mentioned above, we might well find that there were regular recurrences, separated by periods of years. It might also appear that actions of the same kind were performed at definite intervals in the course of a lifetime in circumstances beyond the individual's normal control.

Again, if a similar life record were available for a second person, whose life was closely connected with the other, still

¹ A little book entitled *Dreams in War Time*, published at Stratford-on-Avon in 1915, has recently come to my notice. Its author, E. M. Martin, observes that October and November gave birth to “stranger” dreams than any other month.

more valuable information might be gained about the relations between minds.

Although I am here speculating, I believe that every observer of his own life will agree that speculation of the kind is justified, and that we ought to aim, so far as is possible, at the creation of such records.

CHAPTER TEN

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

ONE DAY in 1870 a village schoolgirl was sitting in a dimly lighted room of a country house in Westmeath, Ireland. In an adjoining room Professor William Barrett, from the Royal College of Science, Dublin, was shuffling a pack of playing cards.

The little girl was in an hypnotic condition, induced by Barrett for the purposes of an experiment.

It was one which could hardly have failed to interest the editor of *Punch* had he been present, for, as mentioned in the first chapter, it was about this very time that he was observing with surprise his "fluke" in guessing correctly what it was that Helen Warner wanted to hide.

In the adjoining room Barrett selected a card from the pack, noted what it was, placed it inside a book, and returning to the first room handed the closed book to the girl.

"I asked her," he recorded, "if she could see what was inside. She made no attempt to open the book, but held it to the side of her head, and said there was something 'with red spots on it.' I told her to count the spots, and she said there were 'five.' The card was, in fact, the five of diamonds."

Such was one of the experiments made by Barrett on the suggestion of the friend to whom the house belonged. At first completely sceptical of the testimony of this friend, Barrett had consented to try his methods on the village children. Soon

Barrett became deeply impressed by the evidence which he himself obtained of the children's supernormal powers of perception.¹

No doubt similar experiments have been made throughout the history of man, despite the danger arising from popular and other prejudices. In modern times the experimental attention of scientists was turned in this direction as a result of the work of Dr. F. A. Mesmer (1733-1815), of Vienna, on "animal magnetism" and the "magnetic" or "mesmeric" sleep, a condition later to be termed hypnosis.

In France, in particular, the study and practice of mesmerism as a curative agent was zealously pursued by some, and roundly condemned by others. The Marquis de Puységur, the Abbé Faria and others, having observed what succeeding practitioners called "community of sensation," the French Academy of Medicine appointed a commission to investigate the subject. After five years' work the commission presented its report in 1831. This affirmed, amongst other matters, the reality of "l'action à distance;" but the Academy, rendered fearful by the findings, obstinately refused to publish the report. In the same spirit the British Association of 1842 was to refuse to listen to James Braid's paper on hypnotism,² and that of 1876 was to omit Barrett's paper from its printed *Transactions*.³

Among the experimenters who are known to have preceded Barrett in remarking the supernormal powers of the mind, as revealed by mesmeric means, may be mentioned Dr. H. Mayo (*Truths Contained in Popular Superstitions*, 1849), Dr. J. W.

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge has left on record (*Survival of Man*, 1909) that in 1870-3 Barrett was experimenting in Telepathy with William De Morgan, the novelist. It may be noted here that within the same period the Rev. P. Newnham, of Brighton, and his wife conducted a series of 309 experiments.

² Eric Cuddon, *Hypnosis, Its Meaning and Practice*, 1938, p. 138.

³ See p. 18. The paper is preserved in *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, i, 238.

Haddock (*Somnolism and Psycheism*, 1851), and Dr. S. B. Brittan (*Man and His Relations*, 1865).

Mayo thus described what these early experimenters meant by "community of sensation":

"The entranced person, who has no feeling or taste or smell of his own, feels, tastes and smells everything that is made to tell on the sense of the operator. If mustard or sugar be put in his [the subject's] own mouth he seems not to know they are there; if mustard be placed on the tongue of the operator the entranced person expresses great disgust, and tries to spit it out. The same with bodily pain. If you pluck a hair from the operator's head, the other complains of the pain you have given him."

Dr. Brittan, of New York, who anticipated some later developments, gave this account of one of the experiments he made about 1860:

"Some time since, while the writer was in Louisville, Ky., a number of experiments were made with Miss Bulkeley, an interesting young lady who displayed remarkable readiness in receiving communications by the mental telegraph. The subject was eminently free from any tendency to disease, and the experimental results in her case were such as to excite the admiration of many intelligent ladies and gentlemen. Being in electro-mental rapport with Miss B., the writer received—from strangers and disinterested persons—cards and slips of paper to the number of twelve or fifteen, on each of which the name of some flower had been previously written. The collection embraced the violet, pink, rose, dahlia, sunflower, tulip, honeysuckle, snowball, waterlily, and others of which our recollection is imperfect. Taking these severally in my hand, I formed an ideal image of the particular flower designated on each separate card or slip of paper, and the images were successively conveyed by this silent, psychological process to the

mind of the young lady, who—with scarcely a moment's delay in any instance—pronounced the name of the flower, each in its proper place, as the card bearing the corresponding name was taken up. All the flowers named above were thus designated except the snowball, which, though not named, was otherwise described as a 'large white flower.' "

The above described experiment has particular interest as a precursor of the method extensively followed in later years. Hypnosis was abandoned, and the usual system of the thought-transference committee of the S. P. R., and of other researchers, was to arrange that while one person looked at a drawing, or figures, or a playing card, another, in his normal state, endeavoured to name it or to reproduce it. A good survey of the first 30 years of organised work, commencing with Barrett, the Sidgicks, etc. in 1881, will be found in Sir Oliver Lodge's *The Survival of Man* (1909).

Experimental work by academically trained psychologists was undertaken at several universities in Europe and America in the 1920's, but apparently the first of such work on a considerable scale was that done at Stanford University, California, between 1912 and 1917, as the result of a legacy specifically for the purpose of experimental psychical research. The report by the responsible professor, Dr. J. E. Coover, appeared in 1917, under the title *Experiments in Psychical Research*, and occupies 549 large pages, followed by a bibliography of about 2,000 books and periodicals. It has been said that Dr. Coover under-evaluated his own results ("telepathic power is relatively rare"); and the reference in the Introduction by Professor Frank Angell to the S. P. R. committee as relatively "amateurs" was, on a restrained and merciful view, tactless. Most English scientists from Bacon to Darwin were such amateurs. But Professor Angell was unquestionably right in arguing that the opinion of a great chemist or a great physicist

on the mind has no special value; every effort should be made to apply formal methods of evaluation to psychical research; the specialist in psychology is best qualified to apply such methods, and will be listened to by the scientific world as a whole.

In this section of a book whose main subject is not experimental work, but the spontaneous occurrence of Extra-Sensory Perception in ordinary life, only passing allusion can be made to the vast amount of work which has since been done at the universities, and by individuals and groups. The names of Rhine, Soal, Tyrrell, Carington, Warcollier, Gardner Murphy, Besterman, Thouless, Estabrooks, Hettinger, Jephson, Martin, Stribic, and very many others are associated with achievements in the experimental field. Developments in the present day and in the recent past are appreciatively dealt with, and credit given to those concerned, in Dr. J. B. Rhine's *The Reach of the Mind*, and in G. N. M. Tyrrell's *Science and Psychical Phenomena*.

It is, however, of importance to give some attention here to the current method of experimental work. The main tendency has been in favour of the collective (or quantitative) as distinct from the individual (or qualitative) experiment. That is to say, briefly, that instead of each experiment being judged by itself as a success or a failure, it is repeated hundreds or even thousands of times, and the result is assessed according to whether the percentage of successes is above or below *chance*.

In order to give a general idea of the nature of such a laboratory experiment in Extra-Sensory Perception, I am permitted to quote the following passage from Dr. Rhine's *The Reach of the Mind*.¹ It describes the type of experiment used to test Clairvoyance in the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University.

¹ William Sloane Associates, 1947.

"The identification of concealed cards seemed to be the best test method, and a simplified card deck was devised. This new deck was composed of twenty-five cards, five each of the following symbols: star, rectangle, cross, circle, and wavy lines. Slight modifications were made in these symbols from time to time and the deck became known as 'ESP cards.'

"For a beginning test of clairvoyance the following procedure was most often used: After the subject was shown the deck of cards and the nature of the test was explained to him, the deck was shuffled and cut and placed face down on the table at which he was seated. . . . The experimenter was seated opposite, with recording materials at hand. The subject was asked to try to identify the top card, and when he made his call by naming one of the symbols, this was recorded and the card removed. But it was not looked at. The next card was called, recorded and removed, and so on until the deck was finished. The cards in the deck were then checked against the call record to discover the number of successes or hits. The subject was encouraged as far as possible, and after the deck was again shuffled and cut another run was made in similar fashion.

"From chance alone the average score expected was 5 per 25 cards. If a subject scored above 5 on the average, the deviation, the total of hits above chance expectancy, was measured by means of a mathematical yardstick called the 'standard deviation.' This measure, which has long been in use in the various sciences, tells what the odds are that *chance alone* did not produce the results obtained. If, for example, a subject were given a test with 4 runs through the deck and scored 7.5 hits per run, the odds would be about 150 to 1 against this total score of 30 hits, or a deviation of 10 above expectation, being produced by pure luck or chance."

Speaking of the results of this particular series of experi-

ments, Dr. Rhine records, "The general average, then, of 7 hits per 25 for the more than 85,000 single card-calling trials made with ESP cards represents all the results. The maintenance of this score over so long a series is a phenomenal demonstration of extrachance performance. It is so significant by mathematical measurements as to leave no doubt that something beyond chance was occurring in the experiment."

If that something was not Clairvoyance, it may be thought that it was Precognition of the results which were going to be known by the agent or the percipient or both of them at the conclusion of the experiment.

Similar results were obtained by Dr. Rhine in tests aimed at the precognitive and telepathic aspect of Extra-Sensory Perception, tests conducted over many years with a large number of different individuals as subjects. All the tests were controlled—that is, watched by an observer who took no part therein—and the accumulated results are impressive in their demonstration of Extra-Sensory Perception.

"Henceforth I will assume that science will in time accept Extra-Sensory Perception," remarks Dr. Rhine. This quiet confidence is shared by the leading experimenters in all countries. Here and there, psychologists with little or no experience of tests of the kind have sought to brush aside the results; but every new advance has to be made in the face of such unscientific manifestations from individuals who are temperamentally upset by change, and the broader indications are that experimental work in Extra-Sensory Perception will figure eventually in the activities of the psychology department of every prominent University.

Among the experiments in Precognition mention may be made of a notable series conducted by Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell, a former President of the S. P. R., and recorded by him in his book, *Science and Psychical Phenomena*.

He contrived an elaborate apparatus worked by electricity, the central feature of which was a group of five closed boxes, each containing an electric lamp. The subject selected the box in which the lamp *was going to be lighted*; her choice was made before the lamp went on, so as to rule out any possibility of her detecting the light in the closed box. The decision as to which lamp was to be lighted was made by a machine, on a random principle into which human control did not enter. The result of this series of experiments was as follows:

<i>Trials</i>	<i>Successes, Actual</i>	<i>Successes, Chance-expected</i>	<i>Odds against Result being Chance</i>
2,255	539=23.9%	451	Many millions to 1 ¹

In precognitive experiments with cards Dr. Rhine used a mechanical shuffling machine with the same object of excluding the human element. His experience of the complexity of the function behind Extra-Sensory Perception, however, led him to consider the possibility of Psychokinesis—the effect of the human mind on matter: in his own case on the shuffling machine, and in the case of the Tyrrell experiments on the electric selector. “In order to rule out any direct mental influence on the fall of the cards in the shuffling machine,” he records, “we went back to Nature herself, and decided to cut the deck of cards on the basis of the daily figures for the temperature extremes obtained from a specified newspaper for a given day fixed in advance. A routine way of using the numbers was worked out and agreed upon. This procedure left nothing to chance or human influence, unless the temperature or its recording device could be subject to such control.”

Of the experiments which were carried out with such extreme caution Dr. Rhine comments, “As far as we have gone, the evidence for Precognition is good against all contesting alternatives.”

¹ G. N. M. Tyrrell, *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, 1938, p. 105.

Perhaps it is only natural that with such decided results before them, the experimenters should consider that their scientific demonstrations are of greater value than accounts of spontaneous personal experiences, and many of them even tend to regard spontaneous experiences as merely confirmatory of the experiments.

Certainly it is of inestimable value that men of science should have before them, under conditions of their own setting, rational evidence of the supernormal (or paranormal or extranormal) nature of our daily experiences, and thus be kept from the error of ignoring half the phenomena of human life.

But the degree of demonstration which attaches to an experiment on the mind is obviously not the same as that which attaches to an experiment in chemistry or physics. The same chemical experiment, repeated under the same conditions, produces the same result. If it is repeated 1,000 times the result continues to be the same. The same experiment repeated 1,000 times on the human mind produces many different results, and our conclusion must be drawn from the average of them.

For this reason those who have made up their minds implacably to oppose the acceptance of Extra-Sensory Perception will continue to cast doubt on results of this type, and it is to be feared that it will be easier for them to impress the general public with their views than it will be for the experimenters.

To appraise justly the case for the experiments, those of us who have had no personal experience of them should bear in mind when looking at these numerical results, that the variations are only what is to be expected in an experiment directed towards the human mind, surely the most complex of all subjects, and one which cannot be expected to respond with the docility which we attend from a piece of matter or a machine. Nor can people who are submitting their minds to experi-

ments successfully be ordered to abandon self-consciousness and to be easy and spontaneous.

Could the most urbane of experimenters place a literary genius in a chair before a group of observers, and say, "Kindly demonstrate your genius," in the certain expectation of getting such a result? It would be more likely that the result would be an embarrassed failure. Yet no one, so far as I am aware, denies the existence of literary genius.

The late Whately Carington, after a formal analysis, inclined to the view that "elderly confident women" show slightly superior, and "young diffident men" slightly inferior perceptive powers in extra-sensory experiments.¹ However likely that may be, it is obvious that variations of temperament and mood will be reflected in the results, and must be seriously considered in conducting an experiment.

Even when someone is found—as has happened at rare intervals—who is capable of demonstrating Extra-Sensory Perception almost "to order," it has not followed that the doubts of determined sceptics have been removed. The demon of disbelief has lifted his head again the following day, and the demonstration has been proved impossible by an experiment on rats.

Consider the case of a man who made such a demonstration of supernormal power in perhaps the most unsympathetic atmosphere in the world—a court of law; and note that it has passed into oblivion so far as orthodox psychology is concerned. The following report is extracted from the *New York Times* of June 30, 1915:

"W. Bert Reese, whose 'mind reading' demonstrations have mystified many scientists, including Thomas A. Edison and Dr. William Hanna Thompson, author of *Brain and Personality*, was discharged yesterday by Judge Rosalsky in General

¹ S.P.R., *Proceedings*, xlii, p. 333.

Sessions on his appeal from a conviction by Magistrate Barlow of disorderly conduct, under a section dealing with fortune telling. Reece convinced Judge Rosalsky, Assistant District Attorneys Bostwick and Flint, and two reporters by demonstrations in court that he was not a disorderly person, but a man with apparently unusual powers.

"Reese was arrested at 230 West 99th Street on February 26 on complaint by Detective Adele Priess, who said she had paid him \$5 to have her fortune told. Reese denied that he had told her fortune or accepted any money. He was found guilty and held in \$1,000 bonds to keep the peace for one year.

"When his case came before Judge Rosalsky yesterday on appeal, Reese asked permission to demonstrate his abilities to the court. He told Judge Rosalsky to write something on each of three pieces of paper, and to fold them so that he might not be able to read what had been written. Judge Rosalsky put the papers in different pockets after he had mixed them up so that he could not distinguish them himself. Then Judge Rosalsky produced one of the folded papers and pressed it against Reese's forehead.

" 'You ask me how much money you have in a certain bank,' he said. 'Fifteen dollars is the answer.'

"Judge Rosalsky admitted that the answer was correct and produced the second piece of paper.

" 'This piece contains the name of one of your old school teachers—Miss O'Connor,' Reese said.

"The third question, which he read correctly but did not answer, was: 'What was the rule in Shelley's case?'

"Reese performed similar demonstrations for the benefit of Mr. Bostwick, Mr. Flint, and the reporters. His last feat was to give the maiden name of the mother of one of the reporters. All the questions were written on General Sessions stationery, which Judge Rosalsky supplied.

“‘I do not consider you a disorderly person,’ Judge Rosalsky said, when the demonstrations were finished. ‘You are honorably discharged.’”

The decision did credit to the court, but one wonders how many other persons may have been wrongly convicted because, unlike Mr. Reese on this occasion, they could not reproduce their unusual powers in an atmosphere of cynicism or hostility.

Reese himself is no longer living to refute allegations that he was not above exploiting his gift. True or false, such allegations have little pertinence in view of the fact that Reese was repeatedly tested by scientific men under their own conditions, and satisfied them of his supernormal powers. Schrenck-Notzing described him as the most extraordinary man of the day, and his demonstration to judge, lawyers and reporters amply bears that out.

If then the demonstration of Extra-Sensory Perception were all that was required to convince enquirers, one would expect that every student of psychology would have the case of Reese brought to his notice, but standard text-books continue to ignore Extra-Sensory Perception.

To what is this virtual censorship to be ascribed? Is it due to the reason which impelled a distinguished journalist of a past generation to declare, “There is a pride of scepticism which is not only offensive to every intellectual sympathy, but has the disastrous effect of furnishing common minds with a blighting and oppressive intellectual conceit.”¹

They were severe words, and not to be indiscriminately applied. Few who in earlier days saw reason to admire the iconoclastic writings of such men as John Morley, Edward Clodd, Robert Ingersoll, J. M. Robertson, and William Archer will ever think that they had common minds or that their scepticism had in it anything of conceit. They inherited a certain

¹ Frederick Greenwood, *Imagination in Dreams, and their Study*, 1894.

situation: it seemed to them that they had to do with ignorance, with delusion, with intolerance; they dealt with it in forthright fashion, and they handed on an agnosticism which was marked by honesty of purpose, and a determination not to slip back into "superstition."

But gradually the picture has been changing. Evidence has accumulated which is not associated with ecclesiastical intolerance or with any systems of supernaturalism; experiments have been organised on a scientific basis; enquiry is inspired by a strictly rationalistic spirit. And it can be seen that the evidence for supernormal mental faculties, while it strengthens the case for what may be termed the spirituality of man and hence of the universe to which he belongs, gives no support at all to mere bigotry or to claims to divine exclusiveness.

Perhaps, therefore, even what seems to be a rooted will publicly to ignore Extra-Sensory Perception on the part of some men of science and letters may be due less to individual inability to emerge from the shelter of Victorian agnosticism than to the fixed policies of corporations to which they are attached—academies, societies, publishing houses, and so on. Such policies wear a somewhat puny aspect when contrasted with the implications of the subject they do not include. Indifference to the fair judgment of evidence which might reduce the sum of human injustice is a short-sighted policy for well-meaning men to pursue. For Extra-Sensory Perception, if established, might be just the corrective needed by those who cause such havoc by secretly wronging their fellows. If deeds and motives, unknown by normal means, may be supernormally always known, the satisfaction of the opportunist and the abuser of power grows rather vapid. The least imaginative may suspect that in a deep sense all is known, and that there is no such thing as a really hidden hand.

What has been so far achieved by the experimental work

should be regarded as a prelude, the confirmation of the fact that supernormal powers of mind do exist.

The difficulty of dividing the results under the heads of Telepathy, Clairvoyance, and Precognition, or otherwise, has not been conclusively eased by the experiments. In the early days Telepathy was thought to be proved if one person, A, while looking at a picture or some object, succeeded in conveying the image of it to a second person, B, who was in another room. More recently it has been realised that such an experiment is as much a proof of Clairvoyance by B as of telepathic perception between the two minds. (Reference is made to Telepathy and Clairvoyance as separate faculties in accordance with present usage, although, as indicated in the preceding chapter, this separation is open to question.)

In the endeavour to get over this difficulty, the sender or "agent" A, instead of looking at a design, merely thinks of one, picturing it in his mind. When the "percipient" B has a mental impression of what he feels the design to be, he makes a record of it. This has been thought to demonstrate pure Telepathy. But however probable that may be, the test in question does not amount to a scientific proof of Telepathy operating between the minds of A and B. The reason is that for the purpose of the subsequent check-up, A has to make a record of what he was thinking; B has to make a record of what he perceived; and thus either of them may be precognising what the other is going to record.

This faculty of Precognition of another person's future perception may have been demonstrated in a series of experiments conducted at London between 1941 and 1943 by Professor S. G. Soal and Mrs. K. M. Goldney, who called them experiments in "Precognitive Telepathy," a term which (as applied to such experiments) had been explained by Professor R. H.

Thouless as, "Foreknowledge of something that will be known to the agent in a short time."¹

The percipient recorded the card which *was going to be* chosen from a set of five in another room; the choice was decided by a third person drawing a coloured chip "at random" from a bag or bowl containing chips of five different colours, each of which had previously been allotted to one of the five card designs. It has been pointed out (by Dr. Rhine) that Extra-Sensory Perception could be used in the choice of these chips so as to match the clairvoyantly or telepathically perceived record already made by the percipient. The objection has force, for there is no application of Extra-Sensory Perception which is more commonly demonstrated than this power to select a particular colour of chip.

This would introduce a telepathic possibility between the percipient and the selector of the chip, which militates against the completeness of the evidence for Precognition, even if we do not go along with those who regard it as axiomatic that Telepathy is "less mysterious" than Precognition, and that we must always prefer the former as an explanation if we possibly can.

In any case, this fine series of experiments did once again demonstrate, under conditions of the strictest surveillance, the truth of Extra-Sensory Perception; although it did not, it seems to me, clarify the problem of the sub-division of the faculty.

Of course no one is so well aware as the experimenters themselves of the complexities which are involved. It is not only that their subject is an invisible and intangible one, but it is part of the mystery of their own existence.

Can the possibility be excluded that sometimes minds which

¹ S.P.R. *Proceedings*, xlvii, pp. 5, and 21-150.

have not been invited to do so may participate in an experiment, and so influence the result? Will doors or man-made rules keep them out? Can minds be isolated one from another? May not the hostile experimenter use Extra-Sensory Perception to disprove Extra-Sensory Perception? Such are some of the considerations which arise from the nature of the subject.

The most important problem that lies ahead seems to the present writer to be that of ascertaining whether Precognition and Clairvoyance ever occur in relation to an object or event not in the future physical sense experience of the percipient or of any other person whose mind he may telepathically cognise. Tyrrell suggested in the work already named that in the case of Clairvoyance this object might be attained experimentally by arranging that the supernormally cognised events are never known to any one individually, but only the sum total of successes and failures.

We may expect to see names and definitions changed, while new experiments may reveal new forms of supernormal power, or at least unexpected applications of those already known, like the Psychokinetic experiments conducted at Duke which demonstrated the disturbing fact that the fall of the dice may be influenced by thought, without the aid of any observable force.

Although disturbing from one point of view, the apparent influence of the mind on the fall of the dice may, from another viewpoint, suggest the idea of turning a game of chance into one of infallible money-making. Disregarding for the moment the dubious morality involved in such a proceeding, it may be noted that in order to be sure of taking advantage of a deviation from chance secured in this way, it would be advisable to play for low stakes over a long period. The danger of trying to acquire a considerable sum quickly may be inferred from the following story quoted by R. A. Proctor, the astronomer:

“In 1813 a Mr. Ogden wagered one thousand guineas to one that *seven* could not be thrown with a pair of dice *ten* successive times. The wager was accepted (though it was egregiously unfair) ; and, strange to say, his opponent threw *seven* nine times running. At this point Mr. Ogden offered four hundred and seventy guineas to be off the bet. But his opponent declined, though the price offered was far beyond the real value of his chance. He cast yet once more and threw nine, so that Mr. Ogden won his guinea.”¹

¹ Richard A. Proctor, *Chance and Luck*, 1887, p. 34.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TOWARDS THE SOLUTION

THE MYSTERY of Precognition will be solved in the ultimate sense only when man succeeds in solving the mystery of existence.

That bears to-day a vaster aspect than when Milton wrote:

What in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.¹

As we look out over the field of nature, with its relentless struggle for existence, and its marvels of growth and renovation; as we reflect upon the records of the rocks, which tell of worlds of beauty and of terror that have passed successively away; as we gaze upon the colossal nebulae blazing in the distant skies, and contemplate the potentialities of the invisible atom; as we endeavour to reconcile the reasonless functioning of one of our fellow creatures with the untutored genius of Shakespeare, or the tiger prowling in the jungle with the Buddha under the bo-tree; as indeed we reflect upon any external aspect of life and being we see much to awe us, and we may see much to sustain the widely held view that the universe is the product of "the blind interplay of matter,"

¹ *Paradise Lost*, bk. I, l. 22.

and that the life which this perpetual interplay has brought into being is inescapably subject to its environment and to its past heredity.

But the phenomena of Extra-Sensory Perception, and especially this anticipation of experience which we call Precognition, do not fit into that mechanistic philosophy. Indeed, so contrary to it are they that they might have come to us from another sort of universe altogether. They provide us with a startling hint that all scientific knowledge may be but half-knowledge, not to say quarter-knowledge or less. They even force us, in a broad sense, to begin all over again.

By the ancients precognitive experiences had been commonly referred to the gods¹ and by nearer forebears to the Divine Creator, or to good or evil spiritual powers under his permission.² When these beliefs were questioned—either absolutely or so far as current activity was concerned—it usually followed that such matters as prophecy, second sight, divination, soothsaying, etc. were relegated to the region of the impossible; and when met with thereafter were classified as mere superstitions of the populace. Such was the verdict and the practice of the commonsense age.

It was a very serious, though in some ways an excusable error on the part of the new science thus to confound Extra-Sensory Perception with its exploitation or misinterpretation by soothsayers and witches; and further to classify the phenomena attributed to it in the same category with stories of dragons and

¹ Though almost unanimous in accepting foreknowledge, the Greek and Roman philosophers did not all share the popular attribution to the gods. Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Democritus were inclined to seek the cause elsewhere. Cicero was almost the only eminent ancient to reject foreknowledge, which he failed to distinguish from the fraudulent practices of the professional augurs.

² See Thomas Tryon's *Treatise of Dreams and Visions, wherein the Causes . . . of . . . the Communications both of Good and Evil Angels . . . Are Theosophically Unfolded*, etc., London, 1695.

satyrs, riding on broomsticks, intercourse with the devil, and so forth. The extravagance of some of the interpretations put by such a savant as Swedenborg on his own exceptional powers of Extra-Sensory Perception¹ (not to mention less learned claimants to divine inspiration) does, it must be acknowledged, go far to show the reason for the scepticism of scientists scornful of mediaeval follies. The error into which science was thus led has been but slowly and partially realised; the more slowly because the apparent impossibility of explaining supernormal mental phenomena produces a feeling of frustration always unwelcome to a logical mind.

Less understandable in a seeker after knowledge is a form of escape from this tremendous issue which has been resorted to of recent date. Extra-Sensory Perception, it is insinuated, even though proved to exist, is a mere relic of the "primitive" past, especially the past of such countries as "India and China" (note the omission of Ancient Greece), and it has no place in modern life. Does this style of treating the subject amount to any more than a declaration that it has no convenient place in the chromium-plated little world in which the speakers love to enclose themselves, away from all reality not cognisable by their physical senses, and there dream their dreams of being "advanced" and "modern"?

Observations which are not made to sustain any preconceived theories, indicate that the intellectual and moral attributes of the mind are not apart from, but in close though unconscious control of extra-sensory powers. Suggestions that these ought to be usable for personal ends, or, on the other hand, that they are "useless" and "undesirable" are meaningless while the true nature of life and of our ends remains unknown. An infant seems *useless* to its mother, and as a rational

¹ Kant recorded evidence of them in a letter to Charlotte von Knobloch, appended to *Dreams of a Spirit Seer*; and Jung-Stilling gives further details in his *Theory of Pneumatology*.

common-sense being she might consider it rather primitive, probably similar to an ancient Chinese, and see no scientific reason why she should not abandon it.

Truth cannot be classified as "primitive" or "modern." Let us constantly be on guard against the temptation to imitate the fabled manoeuvre of the ostrich, one of which Carlyle said, in his quaint and forceful language, that it invites an *a posteriori* awakening.

The open-minded enquirer recognises at the outset that a direct answer has to be given to this question: is the whole truth about the nature of man to be sought for and included in the bases of scientific, philosophical and religious discussion, or is it not?

An affirmative reply may give us the patience to glance briefly at the attitudes and efforts of some of those who, during the past hundred years, have felt impelled to confront the problem of Precognition.

Some Previous Theories

Those psychologists of the early part of the nineteenth century who had met with too many precognitive dreams to be able to deny their occurrence, could only, like Abercrombie and Brière de Boismont, ascribe the greatest possible number to chance coincidence, or, like Debay, acknowledge them to be the indications of a profound and seemingly unfathomable mystery.

"Superstitious people," said Debay, "think that they get over the difficulty by ascribing these prophetic dreams to an intuition. But what is an intuition? '*It is a sort of revelation of the future made by an unknown power.*' It would be as useful to say that the god Morpheus sends us one of his dreams to warn us of what is to come."¹ And the author concludes on the futility of explanations of that type in an age of science.

¹ Auguste Debay, *Les Mystères du Sommeil et du Magnétisme*, Paris, 1845.

Yet there continued, especially in Germany, where Christian mysticism long resisted the more materialistic thought of England and France, to be a tendency to refer Precognition to the spiritual world. Some of the most famous philosophers of Germany had been among those who recognised the reality of happenings which they referred to a "supersensible world." Many, no doubt, look upon this mysticism as mere evidence of retardation. However that may be, it was unfortunately the case that the work of the men who elsewhere were laying the foundation of the great doctrine of evolution was unaccompanied by any theory which essayed to explain, or which even took account of supernormal phenomena; and there is no doubt that dire consequences have flowed from this gap in our knowledge.

That all the dark happenings of recent times are not, however, due to the imbibing of materialism, may be indicated by the suggestion made by one pious German mystic, Dr. Jung-Stilling, that the police should forbid certain people, under pain of imprisonment, to reveal any apparitions of death or similar phenomena which they had experienced!

"Seeing in dreams," said Dr. Joseph Ennemoser, of Berlin, author of a *History of Magic*,¹ "is a self-illuminating of things, places and times." "For," summarises Catherine Crowe, "relations of time and space form no obstruction to the dreamer: things near and far are alike seen in the mirror of the soul, according to the connection in which they stand to each other; and, as the future is but an unfolding of the present, as the present is of the past, one being necessarily involved in the other, it is not more difficult to the untrammelled spirit to see what *is* to happen, than what has *already* happened."²

¹ *Geschichte der Magie*, Leipzig, 1844.

² Catherine Crowe, *Night Side of Nature*, 1848. Leibnitz's view that the soul is "the mirror of the universe" predominated in German thought on this subject.

More reasoned was the opinion expressed by Dr. S. B. Brittan of New York:

"Without presuming to dogmatize on so intricate a subject, I will here suggest my idea of the law of prophecy. In the most essential sense all things have a permanent existence, extending backward through the long chain of causation and forward through the unlimited succession of immediate effects and remote consequences; and as all events really exist in the causes that produce them, before they actually transpire in the outward world of effects, it naturally follows that whenever the mind—by whatever means—is uplifted to the proper moral and spiritual altitude, it perceives the event before it occurs in the sphere of outward manifestation. The man gifted with prevision foresees what will happen, because he is able to discover the operative causes which already exist, and must inevitably develop the apprehended results. Thus our premonitions; the visions of future occurrences; and every prophetic impulse, may be subject to law and susceptible of a rational explanation."¹

Brittan proceeded to cite Telepathy as a partial explanation of Precognition of events depending on intentions already existing in other people's minds. Yet (as the expression "by whatever means" indicates) he was forced on the general question of the solution of the problem to refer it to the spiritual world; or, as he put it in another passage, "if there are intelligent beings, of a superior order, existing either here or elsewhere, they may be capable of entering into psychological relations with the human mind on earth."

Naturally the reference of the problem to the spiritual world gave no satisfaction when it was unaccompanied by any explanation as to why the spirit should be better informed.

Nor could Spiritualist mediums, who have so frequently

¹ *Man and His Relations*, 1865.

produced phenomena which science is unable to explain, elucidate the question of Precognition. They simply referred it, like everything else, to the spirits, without being able to say how these latter procure the foreknowledge ascribed to them. But an ingenious theory has been advanced that the spirits speaking through the medium may subsequently proceed to influence other people by a species of super-hypnotism, causing them to act in ways which would bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy. Where the object is, in a particular case, to prove the existence of the spirits, the theory has reason. We could not, however, avoid the logical necessity of applying it to all Precognition important or trivial arising in daily life, thus reducing ourselves to mere puppets in the hands of invisible entities: the Precognition of an accident, for example, would imply the activities of these entities to bring it about.

Modern Occultism provides us with a but slightly greater degree of satisfaction in this matter. It places all dream experiences in the "astral world," to which the astral body of the sleeper goes. Certainly this is not more incomprehensible than citing additional dimensions of space; and the doctrine of "karma" throws a gleam of light in the direction of our immediate problem by its assertion that before each reincarnation the "Ego" has a vision of his coming life.

But still it is not made clear to us how the "Ego" obtains this prophetic vision. Though modern Occultism, as expounded by such a master as the late Rudolf Steiner,¹ commands respectful attention, and wins on many grounds the highest admiration, it cannot be said that it makes comprehensible the process of Precognition.

Those who are impatient with any form of mysticism might ask themselves whether the apparent impasse created by the

¹ See his *Outline of Occult Science*, *Problems of Our Times*, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, and *Psychoanalysis in the Light of Anthroposophy*.

phenomenon of Precognition is not an effective reminder of the limitations of the existing body of official science, and of the unwisdom of assuming that every other school of thought must be composed of persons incapable of reasoning. And not only official scientists but those psychical researchers who gave so many not over fruitful years to studying "spirit" phenomena may come to recognise that they were at fault in almost ignoring the more profound and better ordered "Spiritual Science" of Western and Eastern occultists.

But almost ignoring Occultism, and largely recognising the insufficiency of Spiritualism, psychical researchers and others have recently been tending to regard the problem as essentially one of the nature of Time. The comprehensive mind of F. W. H. Myers gave early voice to this.

"Few men," he wrote in 1895, "have pondered long on these problems of Past and Future without wondering whether Past and Future be in very truth more than a name—whether we may not be apprehending as a stream of sequence that which is an ocean of co-existence, and slicing our subjective years and centuries from timeless and absolute things. The precognitions dealt with here, indeed, hardly overpass the life of the individual percipient. Let us keep to that small span, and let us imagine that a whole earth-life is in reality an absolutely instantaneous although an infinitely complex phenomenon. Let us suppose that my transcendental self discerns with equal directness and immediacy every element of this phenomenon; but that my empirical self receives each element mediately, and through media involving different rates of retardation; just as I receive the lightning more quickly than the thunder. May not then seventy years intervene between my perceptions of birth and death as easily as seven seconds between my perceptions of the flash and the peal? And may not some intercommunication of consciousness enable the

wider self to call to the narrower, the more central to the more external, 'At such an hour this shock will reach you! Listen for the nearing roar!' "¹

Taking a similar view of the possibilities, Sir Oliver Lodge, the distinguished physicist, commented in his *The Survival of Man* (1909):

"The anticipation of future events is a power not at all necessarily to be expected on a Spiritistic or on any other hypothesis; it is a separate question, and will have important bearings of its own. An answer to this question in the affirmative may vitally affect our metaphysical notions of 'Time,' but will not of necessity have an immediate bearing on the existence in the universe of intelligences other than our own."

In 1925 Dr. Hans Driesch, Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig University, expressed this view:

"I myself have long hesitated to accept it [prophecy] as a fact, but I have become convinced of its existence. . . . We might go back to the theory of the *miroir de l'univers* [Leibnitz] here again. The future, then, would be *present* in a certain way, not in the form of a possible mathematical calculation, but *immediately*. Time would be a restriction in the field of appearances, nothing else. It is useless, however, to say more about a problem which we are sure we *cannot* understand in our present form of mentality."²

The tendency has been more and more in sympathy with modern physics, which has dismissed space and time from its universe as separate entities, and substituted for them a four-dimensional space-time continuum.

Thus Mr. J. W. Dunne, who brought the problem of Precognition strongly to the attention of the general public and the world of science in 1927 through his book, *An Experiment*

¹ S.P.R., *Proceedings*, xi, p. 592.

² Hans Driesch, *The Crisis in Psychology*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1925.

with Time, proposed a theory of "Serial" or multi-dimensional Time; while in 1937 Professor C. D. Broad, of Cambridge, in a paper entitled "Philosophical Implications of Foreknowledge," suggested (with complete reserve) the possibility of a two-dimensional time.¹ Summaries and criticisms of these theories will be found in Tyrrell's *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, and in Saltmarsh's *Foreknowledge*; while Dunne's theory, in particular, has been metaphysically dissected in Dr. M. F. Cleugh's *Time*, 1937.

Theories which postulate additional dimensions of space and time are based on the supposition that Precognition derives from an already existing event. They take it for granted that since people do precognise the future the only possible explanation is that, in some way, that future already exists; that Time or Change is a kind of band, comparable to a rolled up film. Our attention is concentrated on the present, but in another dimension our attention could be directed to other parts of the film, and so we could see what we call, in our three-dimensional, one-way time world, the "future."

A third theory² was that of Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh, who based it on what he called "the greater specious present." The subliminal consciousness (subconsciousness), he suggested, possesses a specious present which extends further into the future and the past than does the present of the supraliminal (ordinary) consciousness. No additional dimension was invoked, but again we have the assumption that future events co-exist with the present. Mr. Saltmarsh concluded that his preference was for complete agnosticism as regards an explanation of Precognition.

¹ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. xvi, 1937.

² See S.P.R., *Proceedings*, vol. xlii, p. 49, and H. F. Saltmarsh, *Foreknowledge*, 1938. Saltmarsh built on the views of F. W. H. Myers, as given at p. 334 etc., vol. xi of the *Proceedings*.

It is indeed a phenomenon so diametrically opposed to all other human experience that theorising about it has an air of complete abstraction, meeting with faint response in other minds. One could perhaps devise a hundred similar theories, making use of terms like "fourth dimension," "two-dimensional time," "subliminal consciousness," etc., without carrying conviction to a single person; and since no means exist of putting theories to a test, it would be impossible to prove or to disprove them.

Without, at this stage, going fully into the reasons, I would suggest that personal experience of the characteristics of Precognition does not sustain the view that it derives from an existing "future event." This postulation of future events as already existing in an other-dimensional state in order to account for precognitive images of them occurring in our normal-experience world ignores much that the phenomenon itself reiterates. So far is Precognition from bearing within itself evidence of being the attainment by means of unknown senses of a future event already existing in another dimension, that it is (usually, if not invariably) stamped with the limitations and inaccuracies of our coming physical sense perception. It is strange that supernormal tapping of an other-dimensional world should be a replica of physical sense experience; it is equally odd that this tapping should correspond to our coming physical experiences, and not wander over a wider range.

Further comment on other-dimensional theories will be made on a later page. The heart of the problem cannot be instantly attained; it requires a gradual approach.

Precognition arises in the mind without, so far as we know or can conceive, any help from the physical sense organs at the time of the Precognition. It corresponds indeed to the coming perception via the physical senses, but as it precedes them it

cannot derive from them. The indications are, then, that it is in the purely mental sphere that we may expect to find the origin of Precognition.

The search requires that we should first look as clearly as possible, and free from prior assumptions, at what actually is experienced.

Precognition as Memory of a Basic Experience

A young man dreamed that he saw an airship crash on a hillside, and burst into flames. Among other details he saw uniformed men arrive on the scene, and particularly noted one who was on horseback. Forty-eight hours later the British airship R. 101 crashed on a hillside at Beauvais, and was destroyed by fire. When the young man heard of this he got hold of a newspaper, and found that the account corresponded to his preceding dream to an extent which forced him to conclude that he had foreseen the accident. Photographs and a news film, in which French policemen, one of them on horseback, were shown arriving on the scene, amazingly coincided with his dream, and confirmed his conclusion.¹

But did he foresee the *accident*? In previous pages it has been shown that what the dreamer precognises is his coming sense perception and the concepts arising therefrom. Whether the dreamer is present at the event, or hears rumours of it, or reads accounts of it, or sees photographs of it, the process is the same. His participation must and can only consist of his individual sense perception. Again and again it has been shown that witnesses of an event will give accounts of it which differ most remarkably, thus illustrating the fact that each individual has his own independent sense perception of the event, and not an absolute knowledge thereof—if we ever have such knowledge of anything but our own existence.

¹ See Dame Edith Lyttelton's *Some Cases of Prediction*, 1937.

Precognition, then, whether waking or sleeping, is in essence a prior intimation of later sense perception. This view of Precognition was set out in the diagram in Chapter ii (p.40), and was confirmed by the subsequently recounted experiences.

An analogy between Precognition and everyday experiences of a normal kind may usefully be made so long as the analogy is not allowed to usurp the place of the real problem.

During one of the air-raids on London I was chatting on the telephone with Miss P. M. P., a friend of ours who lived some miles away across the town. Miss P. asked me, with the coolness which she and many other women acquired under those sometimes battlelike conditions, whether I could hear a bomb which was whistling down near her house. I could not hear the descent, but a moment afterwards, via the instrument, I did hear the familiar roar of the explosion. While Miss P. and I were commenting on the incident, the sound of the explosion came to me a second time: it had been travelling from Kensington to Hampstead through the air in the usual way. In relation to the second hearing, the first had been, in a normal sense, "precognitive."

To take a commoner experience: one day I was standing at the end of a big field, and away at the far end another man kicked a football. I saw the impact of his foot with the ball, but heard no sound until the ball had risen a considerable distance in the air. Then, oddly out of place as it seemed, came the "biff" of the impact of foot and ball. If I had closed my eyes in the first place, or if I had been a blind man dependent on hearing alone, the sound of the impact would have been my sole means of knowing that the ball had been kicked.

In relation to the ear, therefore, the eye gave me "precognition" of the event. Of course, it will be obvious that both these anecdotes have no application to our problem except as useful analogies. They are not in themselves examples of Precogni-

tion in the supernormal sense. Given normal experience and knowledge, the fulfilment of these "precognitions" could be rationally foretold. If this is borne in mind the continuation of such analogies may yet serve a good purpose.

But even the eye, in an exact sense, did not give me simultaneous information of the event on the football field, for despite its immense speed light also takes time to travel. An observer on a star some 1,000 million million miles away, if provided with a telescope of adequate power, could now be seeing the American Revolution in progress (just as Flammarion's imaginary character Lumen¹ saw the French Revolution), because the light reflected from the earth in 1779 or thereabouts is only now attaining the remote star on which the supposed observer is situated. But if a being on that remote star 170 years ago could by any possible means have received *simultaneous* news of the American Revolution, and had recorded it in his diary as a "curious dream," his descendant with the telescope in 1949 would be confronted with a problem similar to that which confronts us.

He would have to denounce the diary as a forgery, dismiss it as a "curious coincidence," hail it as a divinely inspired prophecy, or proceed to study it as a serious scientific problem.

The star-being's problem, once he had ascertained the fact that light travels at about 186,000 miles a second, and has consequently taken 170 years to come from the earth, is to find out how his ancestor could have had simultaneous or at least quicker knowledge of the event. He is forced to postulate something which we will call "simultaneous radio," by means of which the news could have been transmitted at once from earth to star-being.

To bring the parallel a little closer, let us suppose that on one of the planets of our solar system an observer is in "simul-

¹ Camille Flammarion, *Lumen*, 1873 (Eng. ed. 1897).

taneous radio" communication with us, and by these means receives news or a televised picture of a certain event. A few minutes later the same being observes the same happening through his telescope. His first seeing might be called "precognitive" of his second.

Now to turn to our problem. At this moment we are perceiving through our physical senses. But last night we already had mental images, not deriving from the physical senses, which correspond to to-day's perceptions.

Provisionally, we may show our star-analogy (ab), followed below by our Precognition problem (AB), thus:

a

Picture of earth event
received on star by
"simultaneous radio."

b

Later picture of same
event received on star
by telescope.

A

Precognition.

B

Apparent occurrence of
the precognised event,
i.e. perception by
physical sense organs
(everyday life).

But as Precognition sometimes anticipates the event by a considerable period, and sometimes by no more than an hour, or a minute, or even a few seconds—as in laboratory experiments—it does not seem very likely that Precognition corresponds directly to the "simultaneous radio" of the star analogy. The irregularity of the time factor points rather to Precognition being something in the nature of *a memory of a still earlier "basic" experience*. I attach the label "basic" to this logically indicated experience to distinguish it from the experiences of everyday life, that is, from the picture of the external world which we create from our physical sense perception.

The comparison may then be set out as follows, bearing in

mind that the first line is given for the purpose of analogy only:

<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>
Picture of earth event received on star by "simultaneous radio."	Ordinary conscious memory of 'a'.	Later picture of same event received on star by telescope.
<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
Basic experience occurring at an undetermined time previous to 'B' and 'C'.	Basic Memory, which is memory in relation to 'A', but in relation to 'C' it is precognitive.	Everyday experience, i.e. perception by physical sense organs, corresponding to 'A' as it manifests in 'B'.

What has here been named the Basic Memory is therefore the memory of the Basic experience A. In relation to C, which represents what is called everyday life, the Basic Memory contains the potentialities of Precognition.

The analogy must now be completely abandoned, if only because the assumption in it of an immense space between the observer and the event has no correspondence in true Precognition. The process which is actually being considered may be set out in its entirety as follows:

A—Basic experience.

B—Basic Memory.

C—Basic Memory intermittently transferred to Conscious Memory (Precognition).

D—Physical experience.

E—Conscious Memory of 'D', which may be observed to correspond to 'C'.

This ordering of events assumes nothing except that cause precedes effect. No mere terminological criticism of the word "Basic" would be relevant, as all that is implied by this label is that the experience underlies or precedes what follows.

Had a more qualitative word been used it might be thought that I was suggesting ideas not at all founded on my own ex-

perience and the parallel experience of others. Nor would even the cautious word "subliminal" be preferable to an equally cautious word specifically applied to the present approach.

However, as the Basic experience is not a physical experience, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it must be an experience solely in the sphere of thought. Just as an invisible planet may be known by the effect which it produces on the orbits of its neighbours, so is the Basic experience known only by the effect we call Precognition. To define it, therefore, is not at the moment possible. The most that can be said, and speaking in relation to the problem under discussion, is that a Basic experience is an experience in the mind, one which, when transferred to the conscious memory, constitutes Precognition of later experiences through the physical sense organs.

That the process suggested is not too complex to be the subject of normal cogitation is not necessarily a disqualification. On the other hand, the fact that propositions based on hypothetical dimensions of time and space are not within this normal cogitative comprehension is not in itself a disproof of them; but it is a work of supererogation to go outside the sequence of the process involved as it has been set out above.

The general impression which may then be formed is that the Basic experience is in the nature of a mind process of which physical experience is—in some sense—a subsequent aspect.

"To them the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images."¹

Have more than two thousand years of research and reflection brought men any nearer to the nature of reality than when Socrates illustrated their limitations by his celebrated parable

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, Bk. vii.

of the prisoners chained in the cave who see, not the real things outside, but only shadows on the wall?

Countless metaphysical arguments have been marshalled, yet still this ancient illustration is necessary. The universe is still but a picture in the mind of man, a presentation of his own, which from time to time he changes in detail. It is still but a reflection of what we infer to be a real external existence. To that picture the physicists and mathematicians contribute the conception of a universe composed of radiation and atoms, which atoms appear to be systems of protons, neutrons, and electrons. These are variously described as electrically charged particles and as systems of waves. As one theory succeeds or supplements another, the changeability and indeterminacy of the atom emerge as demonstrable facts.

In a well-known passage, Sir James Jeans, the distinguished mathematician, declared:

"To-day there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter—not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exist as thoughts."¹

There is special pleading here, but it cannot seriously be questioned that Jeans was right in saying that the general trend of physical science has been away from mechanistic interpretations, and this not as a result of vestiges of the theologies of the "two-and-seventy jarring sects," but as a direct result of scientific observation. The apparent indeterminacy of the atom

¹ *The Mysterious Universe*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1930.

does not, of course, prove the presence of mind, but it strongly suggests that there is room, even need, for something comparable to mind.

The new picture, then, does not include a concept of matter as being alien to mind. The entire universe is even compared in its nature to mind. This picture, unlike the older one, is not challenged by the theory of the origin of Precognition to which the preceding discussion led.

For if matter be comparable to mind, then Precognition may have its place in such a view as memory of a Basic mental process which is part of a mental process of which the whole universe is itself a manifestation, or a correspondence, or an aspect.

These are profound waters upon which to venture, but it so happens that every time he precognises a coming experience each human being proves himself to be a denizen of those deeps. Not only is the mind of the observer the interpreter, and therefore for himself the creator of the external world, but Precognition hints at a mastery that is more than immediate interpretation.

It is not too much to say that any conception of the nature of reality which is irreconcilable with the phenomena of Extra-Sensory Perception must be radically incomplete. How can any conclusion embody truth—whether regarded as absolute or relative to the observer—when it contradicts or ignores observation of the observer himself? Man's picture of the universe which does not comprise a true picture of man himself, however much it be elaborated, can never amount to more than an academical hobby.

The Question of Freewill

If the Basic mental process corresponds to the physical experience which is its manifestation or correspondence, it may be thought that all physical sense experience must have been

determined by the Basic process as absolutely as under a mechanistic system from which Precognition is excluded.

The faculty of Precognition, as the memory of a Basic process, is to be regarded as part of a sequence. It links the physical sense experience which follows it with the hypothetic Basic process which precedes it. Individual participation in this latter may just as well involve individual responsibility as not.

In the concluding words of the passage from *The Mysterious Universe* which was quoted above, it is made evident that the individual mind is considered as a separate outcome of the universal mind. The idea is still present of considering the human mind as emerging from matter, even though the matter is now regarded as a species of mind.

But the strongly marked individualism of Precognition may be due to the fact that the individual mind participates in its own sphere in a creative manner. This participation in that process which is here termed the Basic mental process would then be expected to be subject to difficulties corresponding to those of physical sense experience. So that there is no more reason to doubt or to confirm the exercise of individual free-will under the theory of a Basic process than there is under any theory whatever.

Though the solution of the problem of free-will and determinism must obviously be involved in a complete understanding of the nature of the Basic experience, the possible ultimate solution of that problem is not compromised by the initial step of postulating such a Basic experience as the cause of Precognition.

Telepathy and Clairvoyance

In Chapter ix a suggestion was made that Telepathy and Clairvoyance might be one and the same faculty. That suggestion arose from various personal experiences, and the litera-

ture of a few years ago shows that many leading psychical researchers were tending toward some conclusion of the kind, until the formidable evidence for Precognition which experimental work was accumulating required a reconsideration of the whole question of Clairvoyance.

It remains possible to conceive this suggested one faculty of Telepathy/Clairvoyance as a reaching out of the mind to perceive thoughts and things not perceptible by the physical sense organs.

Such an idea of direct action is most natural because of the nature of physical experience. The absence of any clue to the operation of Telepathy or Clairvoyance in the chemical and motor processes of the body leads to the envisaging of an "etheric" body, putting out tentacles, emitting and receiving radiation. Support for such theories may be found in the phenomena of Psychokinesis (otherwise Telekinesis), the movement of material objects by mind force, that is, without the use of known or observable physical force.¹

But while Psychokinesis may be tested in various ways, and the results, because of their effect on physical objects, reasonably assigned to an emanating "force," such an assignment in the case of a faculty whose results are purely mental is not so easily envisaged.²

It is even more difficult to imagine a theory under which thought bodies and emanations could have any application to the problem of Precognition.

¹ See the *Report* of the Dialectical Society, 1871, and the papers of Sir William Crookes in the *Quarterly Journal of Science* of the same year. Among later evidence may be mentioned Emile Boirac's *Our Hidden Forces*, 1917, Baron von Schrenck Notzing's *Phenomena of Materialisation*, 1920, Dr. W. F. Prince's *The Psychic in the House*, 1926, Dr. Gustave Geley's *Clairvoyance and Materialisation*, 1927, the account of Dr. Eugène Osty in *La Revue Métapsychique*, 1932, Harry Price's *Further Experiments with Rudi Schneider*, 1933, and Dr. J. B. Rhine's *The Reach of the Mind*, 1947.

² For such a theory see E. C. Rogers, *Philosophy of Mysterious Agents*, 1853, p. 249. Cf. also Joseph Sinel's *The Sixth Sense*, 1927.

It is possible that a fundamental distinction may lie between two kinds of supernormal mental faculty (instead of three), namely, on the one hand Precognition, being "memory beforehand;" and on the other Telepathy/Clairvoyance, being "present perception." Such a distinction would obviously simplify the classification of instances.

But the simplicity would soon be found to be superficial, for the more the phenomena are studied the less reason is found to justify any decisive separation of Extra-Sensory Perception into different forms. It seems much more likely that one and the same function is concerned in all instances.

The general conclusion which I believe departs least from what is observed is that the mind comprises not only the "normal" memory, conscious and unconscious, appearing to derive from physical sense perception, but also this other anticipatory memory, deriving from the Basic experience, which from time to time passes to some degree into conscious awareness, and whose unconscious functioning may be experimentally demonstrated.

The mind also reacts sympathetically with other minds, independently of the senses, and this Telepathy may take the form of common perception, recollection, or Precognition.

In addition, there is much in everyday experience to compel the conclusion that Clairvoyance, or awareness of objects independently of the normal means, is a fact; but in experimental demonstrations Clairvoyance has not been decisively distinguished from Precognition by the subject, or from his telepathic awareness of another person's Precognition.¹

The Co-existence of Past, Present, and Future

The co-existence of past, present, and future which has been required by recent efforts to explain Precognition is not opposed to the present view except in as much as it refers Pre-

¹ As to "Retrocognition," see Glossary under that word.

cognition directly to an external now-existing future event.

Naturally, if reality presents itself to the observer according to the dimensional world in which he exists there is no limit whatever to the purely speculative possibilities. Our familiar three-dimensional space and one-dimensional time lend themselves to any amount of theoretical modifications by which some semblance of explaining the supernormal may be arrived at.

The argument that the difference between two dimensions and three dimensions of space offers some indication of what might be involved by awareness of a fourth dimension of space, has force. We might then be able to perceive the inside of a closed box, and so on. On the view that *time* is the true fourth dimension it is similarly arguable that the box, the tree which provided its wood, the iron ore which became its nails, and the dust to which they will be reduced all exist simultaneously in a relative sense.

It is recognised that what we commonly call time does not exist except as a verbal convenience. In using the word we name a manner of measuring the change or becoming in what we observe by comparing one set of changes with another; and the motions of the earth in relation to the sun provide a convenient sequence of changes against which to measure all others.

From this it may follow that "past," "present," and "future" are not sections of a "passing time," but labels indicating the order in which we observe an external world which merely exists, but which (outside the mind of man) has no "past," "present," or "future." Time, then, is relative: it means something altogether different to different observers in the universe.

The principle of relativity, as propounded by Einstein over forty years ago and since developed by Minkowski and others, was intended to meet the situation arising from the vulnera-

bility of the older view of the universe as a vast (infinite) machine, whose empty "spaces" were filled with hypothetic "ether," and the substitution for this of a conception in which matter and all else is electrical in nature. The theory of relativity proposed a four-dimensional space, one in which the ordinary three dimensions of space are coalesced with one dimension of time, thus constituting the "space-time continuum." In the continuum space and time as separate entities have no place: they are subjective creations of the human mind.

But it is precisely the human mind with which we are dealing. The mathematician believes that his formulae tell him something of the real non-subjective nature of the universe. What has this to do with Extra-Sensory Perception? So little, that he is in danger of forgetting that no picture of the universe, however consistent it may momentarily seem with a limited set of facts, can have the least validity if it ignores the mind of the observer.

If, however, we do ignore it, let us keep the limited problems of astrophysics quite apart from the greater issue of the nature of the mind. We cannot, just to make a gesture of co-operation towards the now slightly mystical picture presented by physical science, proceed on the assumption that part of the mind is in a different kinetical and spatial condition from another when Precognition occurs. Yet though a part of the mind is evidently not on a planet with a different speed in relation to the sun, some such assumption is tacitly involved in recent approaches to the problem of Precognition.

Nor do I see how such an assumption can be sustained. We know—as well as we can ever know anything—that one observer, the conscious mind, is localised in space-time. Where then is the hypothetic second observer? It is not enough to say that he is in another temporal dimension, for, relatively to the first observer, he needs a spatial qualification. In the follow-

ing commentary on the ingenious theory of a "two-dimensional time," however, I leave on one side this objection, and accept the suggested second observer.

While the observer in the first of the two times sees a seed, the observer in the second time sees the bush into which it has developed. (The illustration is mine). Should the first observer obtain a supernormal glimpse of the second dimensional time world it would constitute Precognition.

There is certainly something fascinating in this, but to realise just how fascinating it should be remembered that while the first observer is looking at the seed, the matter which will compose the bush is, for him, in distant oceans, in other plants, in the bodies of various animals and insects, in the air, and in the soil. Yet coexistentially, for the observer in the second time dimension, this matter does compose the bush.

Mr. H. F. Saltmarsh has pointed out that under such a theory we could envisage a man who appeared to die last year in one dimension as existing at an earlier stage of the same life in the other dimension; or, *vice versa*, an apparently living man as apparently dead from another dimensional viewpoint.

Such speculations bear a thrilling aspect, and wonders are to be expected in connection with so baffling a mystery. Perhaps it may be feared that there is some danger of courting the bizarre for its own sake.

Yet, on a first view, anyone who happens to have observed his precognitive experiences over a long period, and who has noticed their correspondence to his own coming physical sense perception, errors and limitations included, may consider the theory of a "two-dimensional time" not only highly interesting but well-founded. He knows that we cannot cognise (or "prehend") an event, but only an image, which image normally arises from perception of a present or past event. A precognitive image, then, is reasonably ascribed to perception

of the future event. That this Precognition and the later physical sense perception should relate to the same event, observed from two different "times," seems to contain the promise of accounting well for the strong individuality of Precognition.

The first doubt comes with the thought that the observer, having somehow obtained access to the second time dimension, there makes his observations by means which obviously do not include his physical senses and physical brain (otherwise we should be committed to the absurdity of supposing an effect on the brain which at once exists and does not exist). It is, therefore, curious that the supernormal senses which we must assume to be employed should be limited to observation corresponding to what the individual will, eventually, experience physically.

But the most serious objection comes when we observe that Precognition can occur in one time dimension only—that represented by our everyday consciousness. In the second time dimension, where events are presumed to be extra-sensorily perceptible at a later stage, there is no provision for the incidence of Precognition itself. It is self-contradictory to suppose that in the second time dimension a man observes the occurrence of Precognition. Precognition of what? The second time dimension being, so to speak, more advanced than our time, no basis exists for Precognition. Thus Myers, Dunne, Maeterlinck, Broad, Saltmarsh, Mrs. Lyttelton and the others who have written books or papers of which observation of Precognition was the cause, have done actions and set in motion trains of consequences which can have no correspondence in the second dimension of time. Before Saltmarsh, for example, finished collecting cases of Precognition (perhaps before he was born), the book containing them ought to have been published for an observer in the second time dimension. But how

could it have been, seeing that for that dimension no provision for Precognition exists?

Yet the two-dimensional time theory requires that every event observed in the one time should have its correspondence in the other time, the difference lying only in the relative position of the observer. Precognition occurring to the observer in one time position only, and being causal, the whole conception falls to the ground. The same objection applies to any other theory that Precognition has its origin in extra-sensory observation of existing events from the standpoint of another time.

Any theory of relativity applicable to Precognition must have other bases than those which belong specifically to current efforts to interpret the physical universe. Precognition has not been shown to relate to "real existence," whether symbolized mathematically or otherwise. It has been repeatedly shown to relate to those impressions of the external world which will arise in the mind. This indeed indicates that the future has already happened, *but it does not indicate in what form it has happened and is existing for the percipient's "now."*

The observer of his own experiences may be inclined to agree that the evidence indicates that they are the memory of a mental process (whether termed "Basic" or otherwise), and that the ascription of this Basic mental process to a "future event" as cause in another time dimension is far less probable than that it forms part of a progressive sequence.

He may be led to place the co-existence of past, present, and future in his own mind, and only in his mind. He may conclude, with all the reserve which so mysterious a problem imposes on our accustomed logic, that his Precognition arises from memory of a Basic mental experience having some relation—causative, complementary, or other—to the later physical sense perception.

The Nature of the Basic Experience

The nature of the Basic experience admits of no definition beyond the indication inherent in Precognition itself, namely, that the Basic experience has a correspondence in the physical experience which follows.

It is important to bear in mind that this correspondence does not imply an identity of cause. Physical sense perception arises immediately from the physical event, but Precognition arises, not from the physical event (which may not yet exist) but from memory of the Basic mental process which, by inference, the physical represents.

Thus the theory of a Basic process is not open to the objection which was made to the theory of two dimensions of time. There is no contradiction involved in allotting to the Basic process the counterpart of Precognition itself. For the Basic process precedes the physical sense experience, and does not relate to the same event as this latter, as observed from a different "time." This preceding process does not correspond to any then existing external event, yet it has its correspondence in the physical sense experience arising from a later external event. The Basic experience, thus has, relatively to the physical sense experience, the appearance of being causal.

Whether it is causal as theologian or theosophist are wont to picture it, whether the "unceasing purpose" or the individual karma proceed from it—such questions seem for long destined to remain unanswerable by the conscious reason. Those who see in pain a path to the inability to inflict it, in humiliation a corrective to pride, in love the antidote to hate, and in experience of the supernormal a counter to philosophic error, also refer all physical things and beings to a causal world of mind, or of spiritual archetypes. The theory of a Basic mind

process, without making any assumptions of transcendental knowledge is not inconsistent with such views.

So far as direct knowledge of the Basic process is concerned we have none. It is more inaccessible than the most minute subject of physical research.

We are as unconscious of the Basic experience as is a child of the processes by which it grows and develops; or as the man who in sleep solves an abstruse mathematical or other problem is unconscious of how he does it, is even unconscious of the fact that he has done it.

Observation shows that Precognition passes into the conscious mind at an undetermined time before the physical experience. It may be a matter of seconds, of minutes, of hours, or of days before. And there have been cases which indicate that it may do so many years beforehand, although a certain reserve inevitably attaches to these.

The Basic Memory, then, must be existing at least during the interval of time that elapses between the Precognition and the physical experience. But we have no data at all to indicate how much longer it may have existed, what period of time may separate the Precognition from the Basic experience which gave rise to the Basic Memory: it may be but a moment, it may be an age.

It may reasonably be conjectured that as Precognition occurs in man and child, it may occur in unborn babe: the future of the unborn babe may lie before it in its mind—its immediate future or all its future. Indeed, if this organisation of cells which we call a man has within him knowledge of his future, we cannot deny the possibility of the equivalent of such knowledge to the first living cells from which sprang all the succeeding life of this planet.

Man's participation in the Basic process and his physical sense perception may be of a nature analogous to the two

swings of a pendulum, the beat of the heart, the intake and the outlet of the breath. The two processes may be complementary, each indispensable to the completion of the mind function.

Actually, so little is known of physical sense perception that not even that half of the problem is fairly before us. It is known that physical sense perception follows after stimulus is applied to a physical sense organ, and the sensation is conveyed to the brain, but at this point no one pretends to have any distinct idea of what happens. The sensations associated with sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch defy all description. We perceive them, and that is all we can say.

That given stimuli should produce automatically certain chemical reactions is one thing; it would be quite another thing that they should produce conscious perception. And when it is found that an equivalent to this conscious perception already exists in the mind (observable in the form of Extra-Sensory Perception) before the application of the stimuli which appear to be its cause, it becomes evident that a purely mechanistic view of the processes of the mind is irreconcilable with all the facts observed. These observations point to the conclusion that the real nature of our experiences, and the real nature of their apparent causes in the external world are entirely different from what is ordinarily supposed.

It is possible that the Basic mental experience (that which gives rise to Precognition, etc.) is an essential preliminary to perception by the physical senses. Without the preliminary Basic experience there would be reaction to physical stimuli of a chemical or motor order, but there might be no perception. Precognition would be unprovided for, and the machine-like man, however efficient in his bodily functions, would not have the awareness of a veritable man.

Physical sense perception may be regarded as the complement of the antecedent Basic experience, previous awareness of the latter constituting Precognition. Whether that be a just surmise or not, it is certain that no one who has experienced Precognition can regard the merely mechanistic interpretations of the mind which are taught in the schools to-day as likely to be nearer the truth.

* * * * *

Introspective psychology is a study which each individual pursues on his own account, and without which he cannot form any judgment at all on the experiences of others; but it is equally true that no individual can decide solely on his observations of himself the true direction in which they point. He must look at the testimony of others, and they must look at his. The extent, brief as it is, to which I have laid open to view my own experiences has been what was required not only to illustrate Extra-Sensory Perception in action, but also (I venture to hope) to inspire some others, whose experiences may be much more important to the issue than mine, to set them down on paper at the time they occur, and to give them out for comparative study by all searchers after knowledge. It is not sufficient that they be placed in the private records of even the most able society; for thus limited they would miss the eyes of many of those in whom they might arouse a spark of recognition and needed encouragement.

The habit of self-suppression in this, not to mention other matters, has been too long fostered by customs which lie upon us "heavy as frost and deep almost as life." If the young and rising life is oppressed from the start by dense teaching we cannot expect the full flower of its mind to be at our disposal, and humanity must the more surely continue to lack a philosophic system which answers to all that reason observes. Though poets and prophets have by varied and often splendid means ex-

pressed the sense of other worlds which they felt within them, their imagery has not satisfied the will not only to feel, but rationally to comprehend, which is the most distinguishing characteristic of man to-day.

If but one hero knew it,
The world would blush in flame;
The sage, till he hit the secret,
Would hang his head for shame.¹

We have moved a little in the simple fact of observing in the daily experiences of our own minds, and in objective laboratory experiments, that Extra-Sensory Perception does occur. Though we have scarcely passed the fringe of enquiry, at least we are no longer evading the task.

It is one which requires that the persistent and unfettered investigation of the external world shall be surpassed in the study of every aspect of the mind and nature of the enquirer himself.

¹ R. W. Emerson, *The World Soul*.

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GLOSSARY AND NOTES

This list purports to offer no more than brief reminders or suggestions. It includes some words not in the text, on account of comparisons which are likely to arise.

Agent. In an experiment, the person who endeavours to transfer a thought to another person (the "percipient"); or from whose mind the percipient obtains knowledge.

Apparition. A visual "hallucination" (*q. v.*)

Basic Memory. The memory which gives rise to Precognition of later perception through the physical senses; and which, in this book, it is suggested must derive from a mental experience having some causal or complementary relation to the real nature of that later perception.

Clairvoyance. Extra-Sensory Perception of objective events, as distinguished from telepathic perception of the mental state of another person (*Journal of Parapsychology*).

Cryptesthesia. Equivalent to "extra-sensory perception."

ESP. An abbreviation of "extra-sensory perception."

Extranormal. See "supernormal."

Extra-Sensory Perception. Response to an external event not presented to any known sense (*Journal of Parapsychology*).

Hallucination. Any apparent sense-perception in the waking or hypnotic state which cannot be traced to an objective cause within the normal range of the sense concerned. Hallucination thus differs from "illusion" which is misinterpretation of an object actually perceived.

Hypnotism. Production of a kind of sleep or trance, in which the subject acts upon suggestion.

Intuition. An uncertain term, applied sometimes to unconscious reasoning, and sometimes to Extra-Sensory Perception.

Libido. Sexual craving (Freud).

Materialism. Belief that nothing is real but the material universe; and especially the view that mind is the product of the interplay of matter.

Mechanism. The doctrine of mechanical causes for all phenomena, including those of the mind; especially the view that living organisms are the product of mechanical and chemical forces.

Mesmerism. The early name for hypnotism (*q. v.*)

Metaphysics. Philosophical enquiries into the nature of reality.

Mysticism. The view that all phenomena have a spiritual cause and meaning.

Objective. That which has external reality independently of the consciousness of the percipient.

- Occultism.** Inward knowledge of the spiritual world, said to be attainable by initiation or training. The word is not properly applicable to modern psychical research, which is characteristically empirical.
- Paragnosis.** Paranormal cognition. Equivalent to "extra-sensory perception."
- Paranormal.** See "supernormal."
- Parapsychology.** The study, as a branch of psychology, of supernormal mental phenomena.
- Perception.** The act of perceiving, or becoming aware of, an external cause by means of any of the senses.
- Percipient.** In an experiment, the person whose powers of perception are being tested. See "agent."
- Precognition.** Perception or awareness, not attributable to information or rational inference, which corresponds to the future sense perception of the subject, or of another person. The reasons for this definition have been explained in the text. The traditional sense of the word "precognition" is supernormal awareness of a future event. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives several examples of its use during the seventeenth century to denote the absolute foreknowledge of God. Thus Martin Fotherby, in *Atheomastix; clearing foure truthes against atheists and infidels* (1619), spoke of "This praecognition and anticipation of God." The word "precognition" does not seem to have been applied to human as distinct from divine foreknowledge until F. W. H. Myers, in 1895, began to use it instead of the previously favoured "premonition" or "prevision."
- Prediction.** Telling the future course of events on the basis of known facts. The word has also been used for "precognition."
- Premonition.** Forewarning; similar in meaning to "precognition," with the added implication of coming danger.
- Presage. Prescience. Prevision.** Terms which have been used at different times to denote "precognition."
- Prophecy.** Conscious foretelling of a future event by supernormal means, or divine inspiration.
- Psi.** The name of the Greek letter representing the initial sound of such words as "psychic," "psychology," etc. was first used by Dr. B. P. Wiesner, of London, to denote the phenomena investigated by psychical research and parapsychology. His object was to avoid using names, traditional or other, which implied a theory as to the nature of what happened. Dr. R. H. Thouless, in his Presidential Address to the S.P.R. (*Proceedings*, vol. xlvii) supported this view, urging that the phrase "psi phenomena" should be used instead of "extra-sensory perception," which he thought might be seriously misleading. At present parapsychologists are using "psi" as an over-all term to cover both Extra-Sensory Perception and Psychokinesis.
- Psychical.** Relating to the nature of the soul or mind. The word has come to be applied almost exclusively to supernormal phenomena and their study.

- Psychoanalysis.** The analysis or investigation of the mind, especially the analysis of dreams, with a view to discovering forgotten memories, suppressed desires, etc.
- Psychokinesis.** The production of an effect by the mind acting on external material objects, without the aid of any observable or known physical force.
- Psychology.** The science of the nature of the mind, its functions and phenomena.
- Retrocognition.** Perception or awareness of past event not known to or within the memory of the perceiver (Saltmarsh). It must be added that the reported cases could be attributed to Clairvoyance of existing historical records, or to Precognition of the coming experience of looking them up. The impressive nature of the historic visions experienced by the unidentified Miss A. (S.P.R., *Proceedings*, vol. viii), and by Miss Moberly and Miss Jourdain (*An Adventure*) is well-known. But there is much to indicate that these supernormal experiences were not visions of the "past." For example, the above *Proceedings* (p. 507) record that Miss A. saw in Salisbury Cathedral, while awake, "a monk dressed in a sort of muddy brown." A footnote adds, "In Steven's *Continuation of Dugdale's Monasticon* there is a plate of a Franciscan which exactly corresponds with what Miss A. saw. We only found this *afterwards*." The subject of the vision was, therefore, in existence at the time of the vision, and was going to be seen normally by the percipient. To establish Retrocognition as a faculty relating directly to the past (as in another "time dimension"), or to a psychic record of the past, cases would be required which fill *gaps* in the archives; confirmation of the archives points directly to Clairvoyance and Precognition.
- Second Sight.** The historic and best-known term for Extra-Sensory Perception, corresponding to the Gaelic *taishitaraugh*. It includes Telepathy, Clairvoyance, and Precognition. The word "second" has been objected to as misleading, since the supernormal "sight" occurs first. In a letter to Mr. Pepys in 1699 Lord Reay used the phrase *Double Sight* as well as Second Sight. The latter term was ingeniously defended by Dr. George Hickes, who maintained that ordinary sight was first in the order of nature, and the other secondary to it. See Pepys, *Memoirs*, 1828 ed., vol. 5, pp. 260-298. Dr. Johnson took a similar view in his account of the Western Islands. However, a modern Scottish commentator, Dr. Donald J. Macleod, in his Introduction to the 1934 edition (Eneas Mackay, Stirling) of M. Martin's *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, says, "This [Second Sight] is a misnomer for the belief. The Gaelic phrase really means 'the two sights,' 'the two-fold vision,' or 'vision in two planes.'" It has been given a Grecian form as "deuteroscopy."
- Spiritual Science.** The study of what are believed to be spiritual processes in human life and in the cosmos.

Spiritualism. The study of supernormal phenomena with a view to discovering evidence that deceased persons continue to exist, and can communicate with those in this life.

S.P.R. Society for Psychical Research.

Spontaneous. Said of an experience which has not been consciously sought. Especially in contrast with "experimental."

Subconscious. The region of the mind to which is referred every mental process of which we are not aware.

Subject. The person who experiences a psychical or other process. In an experiment, the person who is being tested.

Subjective. Describes that which exists in the consciousness of the subject, to distinguish it from external or objective existences.

Subliminal. Literally "beneath the threshold" of the conscious. Approximately equivalent to "subconscious."

Supernormal. Outside accepted experience of cause and effect (Saltmarsh).

Supraliminal. Lying "above the threshold" of consciousness. Normal consciousness.

Telekinesis. Has the same meaning as "psychokinesis" (*q.v.*)

Telepathy. The communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another independently of the recognised channels of sense (Myers).

Or: Extra-Sensory Perception of the mental activities of another person (*Journal of Parapsychology*).

Unconscious: A psychological equivalent to "subconscious" or "subliminal."

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