

Telepathy.

ASTRA.

[CONTINUED.]

AN interesting class of telepathic phenomena is formed by the cases where similar thoughts have occurred and impressions been made in minds far apart without any known methods of communication. Many of the cases reported in late years have been supported by the evidence of persons of unimpeachable character, leaving no doubt as to their occurrence, and are of such a nature as to preclude all idea of coincidence. It is also found that in almost every case there is some previous relation between the two minds in communication, as in a condition of anxiety for the absent or a very strong yearning. The following cases, collected by the Society for Psychical Research, are excellent examples of this class of phenomena, and having been proved to the satisfaction of a committee appointed by that body, may be considered reliable:

On September 9th, 1848, at the siege of Mooltan, Major-General R—, C. B., then Adjutant of his regiment, was most severely and dangerously wounded, and supposing himself dying, asked one of the officers with him to take the ring off his finger and send it to his wife, who, at the time, was fully 150 miles distant, at Ferozepore. On the night of September 9th, the wife of General R— was lying on her bed, between waking and sleeping, when she distinctly saw her husband being carried off the field, seriously wounded, and heard his voice saying, "Take this ring off my finger and send it to my wife." The apparition haunted her all the next day and the words uttered by her husband's voice kept repeating in her mind. The mental condition into which the vision threw her was anything but an enviable one; and her anxiety can be better imagined than described. In a few days news came to her that the General had been severely wounded in the assault on Mooltan. He survived, however, and is still living. Quite a long time after the siege the lady heard from one of the officers who helped to carry the General from the field,

that the request was actually made to him, just as she had heard it at Ferozepore at the time it occurred.

The next case is still more remarkable, as the impression was conveyed to minds at the same time, the agent being in an abnormal state. It was related by Dr. C. Ede, of Guildford, Surrey, England, to whom it was told by Lady G. and sister, a short time after the occurrence:

Lady G. and her sister had been spending the evening with their mother, who was in her usual health and spirits when they left her. In the middle of the night the sister awoke in a fright, and said to her husband, "I must go to my mother at once; do order the carriage. I am sure she is taken ill." The husband, after trying in vain to convince his wife that it was only a fancy, ordered the carriage. As she was approaching her mother's house, where two roads meet, she saw Lady G.'s carriage. When they met, each asked the other why she was there. The same reply was made by both, "I could not sleep, feeling sure my mother was ill, and so I came to see." As they came in sight of the house, they saw their mother's confidential maid at the door, who told them when they arrived that their mother had been taken suddenly ill, and was dying, and had expressed an earnest wish to see her daughters.

Dr. Ede relates a little incident which happened to him personally. About a half mile from his home there was a house inhabited by some ladies, friends of the family, and outside of the dwelling there was a large alarm bell. One night Dr. Ede awoke and said to his wife, "I am sure I heard Mrs. F.'s alarm bell ringing." After listening for some time they heard nothing and went to sleep again. The next day Mrs. F. called upon his wife, and said to her, "We were wishing for your husband last night, for we were alarmed by thieves. We were all up, and I was about to pull the alarm bell, hoping he would hear it, saying to my daughters, I am sure it will bring your husband, but we did not ring it." Mrs. Ede asked what time it was; Mrs. F. said it was about half past one. That was the time Dr. Ede awoke, thinking he heard the bell.

In the memoir of the late Bishop Wilberforce, a similar transmission is recorded in the following words: "The Bishop

was in his library at Cuddesdon, with three or four of his clergy writing with him at the same table. The Bishop suddenly raised his hand to his head and exclaimed: 'I am certain that something has happened to one of my sons.' It afterwards transpired that just at that time his eldest son, who was at sea, had had his foot badly crushed by an accident on board his ship." The Bishop himself records this circumstance in a letter written at the time, and dated March 4th, 1847: "It is curious," the Bishop writes, "that at the time of his accident, I was so possessed with the depressing consciousness of some evil having befallen my son Herbert, that at last on the third day after, the 13th, I wrote down that I was quite unable to shake off the impression that something had happened to him, and noted this down for remembrance."

The transference to a sleeping percipient of the impression of a distressing accident, is the last form of telepathic experience we shall take up in this article. There are many instances of this kind, and still more of the apparition of a dying person perceived by a distant mind in dream and in vision. Cases of transferences where the agent is in this most momentous of all conditions, seem, however, to differ from the less momentous cases in the fact that the number of them, where the percipient is asleep, large as it is, is disproportionately exceeded by the number where the percipient is in a state of normal waking consciousness. It will be well to illustrate these last classes by the following cases:

The Rev. R. B. F. Elrington, Vicar of Lower Brixham, vouches for the fact that the following occurrence in his parish was described hours before the arrival of the news confirming the fears which it occasioned, and he certifies to the good character of the witnesses.

In the early spring of 1881, Mrs. Barnes, of Brixham, Devonshire, whose husband was at sea, dreamed that his fishing vessel was run into by a steamer. Their boy was with him, and she called out in her dream: "Save the boy!" At this moment another son sleeping in the next room rushed into hers, crying out, "Where's father?" She asked him what he meant, when he said he had distinctly heard his father come upstairs and kick with his heavy boots against the door, as he was in the habit of

doing when he returned from sea. The boy's statement and her own dream so alarmed the woman that early next morning she told her neighbors of her fears. News afterwards came that her husband's vessel had been run into by a steamer, and that he and the boy were drowned.

The following narrative was had from three independent sources, viz.: (1) Letter from Mr. John C. Strefford, 39 Mount street, Welshpool, son of the superintendent of police, whose dream is recorded and who is now dead; (2) verbal account taken down from Miss Phillips by Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood; (3) letter from the Rev. J. E. Hill, Vicar of Welshpool. All the accounts are practically identical, the only discrepancy being the length of time for which the girl was imprisoned. The incident is related briefly as follows:

About 1871 Miss Phillips, of Church street, Welshpool, had a deaf and dumb maid. This girl fell ill and needed a change of air, and Miss Phillips proposed to send her to her brother for three weeks. The girl was very unwilling to go, and on the appointed morning, a Tuesday, she handed over a tray which she was carrying upstairs to another servant and was not seen afterwards. Miss Phillips and her friends in great alarm searched the house all over, including the cellar in which the girl was afterwards found. On the following Friday (or possibly the Wednesday) morning, the superintendent of police, Strefford, called and said that he had an impression on his mind that she was concealed in the house and begged to be allowed to make search. Miss Phillips consented, and Strefford, who had never been in the house before, walked straight to the door of the cellar stairs and went down. In the cellar they found the girl jammed fast in an open flue directly beneath the fireplace in the room above, the ashes of which it was meant to receive. The opening from the flue to the cellar was not above eighteen inches high, and the girl had drawn some carpeting after her so as to conceal her legs. They were compelled to get bricklayer's tools and dig down the bricks before they could get the girl's body out.

Now as to the cause of Mr. Strefford's assurance that he would find her there. "My father," says Mr. John C. Strefford, awoke my mother in the middle of the night and said, 'I know

where that poor girl is. She is up a chimney in the cellar belonging to the house in which she lives.' He could not rest after this : got up at five o'clock, went to the house and found the girl as above narrated."

During the early part of September, 1898, the following account of a terrible accident followed or accompanied by a telepathic message, was transmitted by cable to the press of this and other countries.

A young man named Livio Cibrario, belonging to one of the most ancient families of Turin, while attempting to climb the peak of Rocciomelone, in the Maritime Alps, lost his way, and on the following morning a search party found his body, terribly crushed and bruised, at the bottom of a deep crevasse. Count Cibrario, the young man's father, who was at Turin, and knew nothing of his son's unfortunate expedition to the Rocciomelone, on the night of the accident aroused the rest of the family, announcing with tears in his eyes that Livio was dead. He had seen him distinctly he said, blood flowing from his battered head, and had heard these words spoken in a tone of terrible anguish :—

"Father, I slipped down a precipice and broke my head, and I am dead, quite dead."

The other members of the family tried in vain to persuade the poor Count that the ghastly vision was nothing but a nightmare, and the bereaved father continued in a state of anxiety bordering upon distraction till the morning, when the official confirmation of the accident reached him. The case is a remarkable one as the Count is a very quiet, matter-of-fact person, not in the least nervous and has never taken any active interest in psychical experiments.

Since the arrangement of topics has brought us around at the end to what we started at, sleep or vision on the part of the percipient, and since no department of our subject has been the field of more folly and superstition than this same realm of dreamland, we may take the present opportunity of stating what dreams are evidently most deserving of notice. Dreams form, no doubt, the most assailable part of our evidence. They are placed almost in a separate category by their intimate connection with the lowest physical, as well as the highest psychical, opera-

tions. The grotesque medley which constantly throng through the gate of ivory thrust into discredit our rarer visitants through the gate of horn. For our purposes, then, the dreams must have been noted down, or communicated to others, directly after their occurrence. If concerned with grave events, those events must not be of a chronic but of a critical kind, such as sudden danger or actual death. If concerned with trivial events, those events must be in some way bizarre or unexpected, not such everyday occurrences as a visit from a friend or the arrival of a present. To all dreams, however, one objection may be taken which has plausibility enough to be worth a minute's consideration. It is said that millions of people are dreaming every night, and that it might be expected, according to the doctrine of chances, that some few out of so vast a multitude of dreams would "turn out true." But, in the first place, an extremely small percentage of this multitude of dreams contain as their single or culminating point the definite sight of some one else in unusual or exciting circumstances.

There are few exceptions to the rule that we are the heroes of our own dreams, and when a single strong impression survives the moment of waking, an occurrence which in itself is comparatively infrequent, the impression is far more often than not of circumstances in which we ourselves are central. And, in the second place, a dream which leaves on the mind a sense of interest or disturbance, extending far into waking hours, is with most of us a decidedly rare event, and is a *comparatively* rare event even with those to whom it occurs oftenest, if the number of their dreams be completely realized. The very fact of a dream being specially remembered and noted may be taken as a proof of its having been exceptional. Far rarer, of course, are the cases where these two rare characteristics are combined, and where a vivid impression of another person in unusual or exciting circumstances, having been first produced in a dream, survives as a haunting and disturbing influence. If the dreams of a single night in this country could be counted it may be doubted whether so large a proportion as one in a million would be of this character. And when this immensely reduced number of dreams is considered, the number of occurrences, coincidently with the dream

of the identical event dreamed of, so far from exemplifying the law of chances, would be found to set it completely at defiance. If it be still objected that this argument at any rate does not apply to cases of coincidence where the event or scene is not of an unusual or exciting kind, and is remembered sufficiently to be noted without the production of any haunting impression, the reply is obvious. Of ordinary and unexciting events and scenes the number possible to imagination is practically infinite; the trivial details of circumstances which any single person can in imagination connect with the various persons of his acquaintance so clearly outnumber the remembered dreams of his whole lifetime, as to put the coincidence of dream and reality again completely outside the law of chance.

Pleasures lie thickest where no pleasures seem ;
There's not a leaf that falls upon the ground
But holds some joy, of silence or of sound ;
Some sprite begotten of a summer dream.

—*Blanchard.*

Thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

—*Shelley.*

Who does the best his circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly ; angels could no more.

—*YOUNG—Night Thoughts.*