



CHAPTER XVII.

THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITISM (*continued*).

Psychometry. — "The Souls of Things." — Professor Denton's Experiments. — Wonderful Visions of the Ancient Environment of Geological Specimens. — A Piece of Mortar from Cicero's House. — Supposed Scientific Tests. — Explanation on Telepathic Principles. — Experiments in Hypnotism compared. — Clairvoyance and Telepathy. — Their Boundary Lines in Transit. — Clairaudience. — Definitions of the Term. — Socrates and his Dæmon. — Modern Instances. — Mental Impressions. — Premonitions. — Their Unreliability. — Remarkable Examples of Clairaudience. — A Lawyer's Experience. — Subject to the Law of Suggestion. — Insanity sometimes results from Ignorance of the Cause. — Practical Suggestions.

THERE is another class of phenomena which has attracted a great deal of public attention, and which demands a passing notice in this connection. It is that class which has received an exhaustive treatment in the work of the late Professor Denton, entitled "The Souls of Things." It has been denominated "psychometry," which may be defined as the supposed power of the human mind to discern the history of inanimate objects by clairvoyance. Many wonderful stories are related of the exercise of this supposed faculty, under the strictest test conditions, as test conditions were then understood. Professor Denton made a long series of experiments with his sister, his wife, and some others who were supposed to possess that power in a remarkable degree. The powers of his wife and sister were indeed wonderful; but, as we shall see, not in the line in which the experiments were directed. It must be pre-

mised that the professor was a very learned man, not only in his specialty, which was geology, but in all branches of human knowledge. His wife and sister were also highly cultivated women, and were specially interested in those branches of learning in which the gifted professor excelled. Thus the conditions were extremely favorable for the production of extraordinary results in whatever branch of occult science they might jointly engage.

It was the habit of the professor to select some geological specimen, or a fragment of some historical structure, and submit it to his percipient for her version of its history. She would readily enter a partially subjective condition, place the relic on her head, and at once give a very plausible, and oftentimes a most wonderfully accurate, history of the scenes which had been enacted within its former environment. Thus, if the object happened to be a geological specimen, she would launch out into a glowing description of its surroundings when found, and going back into its history before the earth's crust was formed, trace it down through the different geological changes until she landed it in the professor's cabinet. Again, a piece of mortar from the dwelling of Cicero would be handed to her, and she would give a vivid description of the domestic life of those who had occupied the mansion, and describe historic events which "might have been seen" from the ancient habitat of the piece of mortar. It is easy to see how all this might be accomplished, and all the known facts stated with accuracy, regarding the geological environment of the piece of stone in her hands, when her own geological learning was taken into consideration. But the professor was not unmindful of so obvious an explanation of her power. To eliminate that element was his first care. To that end he would wrap the specimen in a piece of paper, and carefully conceal its character from her objective knowledge. The result was always the same. She would read the history of the specimen with the same apparent accuracy as before. The professor, however, did not forget the possibility that telepathy was an element necessary to be

eliminated. The possibility that she might read what was in his own mind must, therefore, be provided against. To that end he wrapped a large number of specimens in packages as nearly alike as possible, and mixed them together so that it was impossible for him to know them apart. One specimen after another would then be handed her, and each one would be described with the same accuracy as before. This was considered the supreme test, and the doctrine that "things," in common with men, have "souls," was thought to be demonstrated. The Orientalists would say that he had demonstrated that the history of all things is "recorded in the astral light," whatever that may be. The spiritist would say that the spirits of dead men had given her the information.

The true explanation is obvious to those who are acquainted with the facts of telepathy. The professor was an eminent geologist and a classical scholar. In his subjective mind was the history of every geological specimen in his possession, pictured clearly and vividly, according to the theories of the best geologists of his generation. His imagination carried him back to the time when chaos reigned supreme. He followed the fragment of rock down through all the changes which took place in the earth's structure, until it became a part of the solid mass of rock from which it was taken. In the ever-changing environment of that fragment, since the time when it was a part of a vast mass of molten matter, there was material for pictures of the sublimest scenes incident to the formation of a world. Those pictures, to the imagination of every geologist worthy of the title, are ever present and intensely vivid. A fragment of rock to him is an open book, in which are recorded the history of the sublimest works of Omnipotence, and his imagination supplies the panoramic illustrations. In experiments such as have been described, these pictures are necessarily presented to the subjective mind of the percipient in a form so clear and vivid that she would be insensate indeed if she failed to describe them in appropriate terms. And when we consider the fact that

the percipients employed in these experiments were exceptionally cultivated women, especially interested in the subjects of the professor's research, it will be seen that successful telepathic experiments were to them exceptionally easy.

The successful reading of the history of the specimens submitted to the percipients is therefore easily accounted for where the professor had conscious knowledge of the contents of the packages. It remains only to explain the reason of success when he sought to eliminate that element by submitting a large number of similar packages, not consciously knowing one from the other. This also is easy to understand when the extraordinary acumen of the subjective mind is considered. It is a common hypnotic experiment to draw a blank card from a package, hand it to a subject, and suggest that it contains a picture of some person. The card is then marked on the back and shuffled with fifty or more others. A good subject will, in nine cases out of ten, indicate the marked card as the one containing the suggested picture, and that without the possibility of seeing the mark on the other side. It is obviously a much easier feat to remember the differences in packages than in blank cards. Of the former, no two could possibly be alike. Of the latter, no two would ordinarily be sufficiently unlike to enable one to determine the difference by the unaided senses. But to the subjective mind the feat of remembering each package and its contents would be very easy, compared with thousands of recorded instances to be found in the literature of psychic phenomena.

It will be observed that we have refrained from invoking the aid of clairvoyance to account for the phenomena of psychometry. It would be a much simpler solution of the problem to assume that the power of independent clairvoyance exists, and that the percipients simply saw the contents of the packages. But inasmuch as the known facts of telepathy afford a perfect solution, we are not logically justified in entering a domain which is in the slightest degree overshadowed by doubt. By this remark it is not

meant to imply that there is any doubt of the existence of a power which is generally known as clairvoyance, but that its limitations are as yet undecided. That is to say, the boundary line between clairvoyance and telepathy is not at present clearly drawn. The field of clairvoyance is constantly narrowing its boundaries. Thus, a few years ago every perception of a fact not cognizable by the senses was attributed either to clairvoyance or to spirits. Sceptics on the latter subject were wont to explain certain phenomena by attributing them to the former. The phenomena which could not thus be explained were relegated to the domain of fraud and legerdemain. When the phenomena of telepathy became better understood, the field of clairvoyance was greatly narrowed, as it was found that most of the phenomena before explained by clairvoyance were really due to telepathic communion. But the powers and limitations of telepathy are not yet clearly marked; and it is found that every step in advance in the knowledge of its principles by just so much narrows the field of clairvoyance. No better illustration of this fact could be given than the phenomena of psychometry, which we have just been considering. The power to read the history of a geological specimen with a plausible show of accuracy was first attributed to clairvoyance. As telepathic powers began to be understood, it was thought that possibly the percipient simply related what was read in the mind of the agent. Many experiments were made throughout the country which demonstrated that fact, and the recognized field of clairvoyance was thereby curtailed. But Professor Denton determined to eliminate the element of telepathy by so disposing of his relics as to divest himself of all knowledge of the particular one under examination. When the percipient exhibited the same powers of discernment under those circumstances it was thought that the element of telepathy was eliminated, and that the power of clairvoyance was demonstrated. But as the knowledge of telepathy is increased, and when it is understood that telepathy is the communion of subjective minds, and that the subjective mind is endowed

with transcendent powers in certain directions, while it is hedged about with limitations in others, it is seen that the professor did not succeed, as he had supposed, in eliminating the element of telepathy. Thus the field of clairvoyance is again curtailed, and that of telepathy correspondingly enlarged. It may be assumed, therefore, that the boundary lines between the two supposed powers are still unmarked. In the mean time it is unsafe to assume any one point as the boundary, or even to assume that there is, in fact, any line at all. Judgment must be suspended until telepathy is better understood. All that can be safely said is that there are facts which cannot as yet be explained on any other hypothesis than that of independent clairvoyance. When we come across such a fact we may provisionally assume the power to exist, and await the slow progress of experimental knowledge to enable us to classify the fact in accordance with its legitimate relations. It is logically safe to do this as long as we thus avoid the necessity of wholesale denials of demonstrated facts on the one hand, and on the other refrain from entering the domain of the supernatural in search of a hypothesis.

It is thought that enough has now been said to explain the part which telepathy plays in the phenomena which have been considered, and also to enable the intelligent reader to apply the principles to all other classes of phenomena in which telepathy constitutes a possible factor. It is constantly reappearing in every phase of psychic phenomena, and constitutes a factor in every manifestation of intelligent power involving the perception of that which is beyond the reach of the senses.

CLAIRAUDIENCE.

The next subject in order is that of clairaudience, or "clear hearing." It is a faculty of the human mind much more rarely developed than that of clairvoyance, — that is, if we assume the latter to be identical with telepathy, which we may do for the purposes of this discussion.

The Century Dictionary defines clairaudience as "the supposed power of hearing in a mesmeric trance sounds which are not audible to the ear in the natural waking condition."

This, as far as it goes, is a correct definition of that faculty; but it defines a very small part of its field of operations, and that part which is of the least importance. It may be defined, broadly, to be "the power of hearing the spoken words of a human soul." In other words, it is that faculty of man's intelligence which enables his objective mind to receive communications from his own subjective mind or from that of another by means of spoken words. It is one means of bringing the operations of the subjective mind above the threshold of consciousness. The power is by no means confined to persons in a mesmeric trance, although it seems probable that one must be in a partially subjective state to enable him to hear clairaudiently. The degree of subjectivity may be very slight, so that the percipient may seem to himself and others to be in a perfectly normal condition. The sounds — if that may be called sound which does not cause atmospheric vibrations — are perfectly distinct to the consciousness of the percipient, but are not perceptible to others who may be near him and in the normal condition.

Like all other means for bringing the operations of the subjective mind above the threshold of consciousness, the sounds have from time immemorial been attributed to supernatural agencies. Socrates furnished the most notable example in ancient or modern times of a man whose subjective mind was able at any time to communicate messages to his objective mind by means of spoken words. It is well known that he supposed himself to be constantly attended by a *dæmon*, or guardian spirit, who watched over him and warned him of any danger that was imminent. (See Chapter X. for a fuller discussion of Socrates and his *dæmon*.) The biblical student will recall to mind many instances where voices were heard, conveying intelligence of the most portentous character, and a critical examination

of some of the instances will not fail to reveal their true nature.

Many spiritual mediums of the present day have the faculty largely developed. Some of them are enabled to obtain the names of their sitters by hearing them spoken clairaudiently, and the names of supposed spirits are obtained in the same way. It is popularly supposed that the ordinary method of telepathic communion, when the message is not brought above the threshold of consciousness, is by mental impressions. It is, of course, impossible for us to know the processes employed in the ordinary communion of subjective minds. It seems probable, however, that it is by means of such language as is employed by the communicants in objective life. All that is or can be known is, that when the ideas are communicated to the conscious mind, it is necessarily by such means as can be understood, — that is, by means which appeal to the senses. It is true that the subjective mind is often able strongly to impress the objective mind, especially when danger to the person is imminent, or when some near relative or dear friend is in danger. Such impressions are known as premonitions. Sometimes they are so strong as to be of real service in averting danger. But they are not always reliable, for the reason that we are seldom able to distinguish a real premonition from that feeling arising from fear and anxiety regarding the welfare of those who are absent and very dear to us. Thus, a mother will often feel that she has a premonition of danger to an absent child, but will afterwards learn that her fears were groundless. Perhaps at another time a real premonition will be disregarded. It seems probable that when the laws of subjective mental action are better understood, there may be some method formulated by which a genuine premonition may be recognized. It is certain that in all cases where danger to the person is imminent, the subjective mind makes a supreme effort to give warning and avert the danger. That being its normal function, its highest activity is exercised in the effort to preserve the life of the individual. It is some-

times successful, and sometimes not; but that the effort is always made does not admit of doubt. Sometimes it succeeds by means most extraordinary, — clairaudience not infrequently being the means of receiving the warning. Thus, a lady once confessed to the writer that she at one time, in a fit of despondency arising from ill health, attempted to commit suicide. She had raised a pistol to her head and was about to fire, when she heard an explosive sound, apparently in the same room, resembling a pistol-shot. This caused her to pause for an instant, when she heard the words, apparently spoken in her ear, "Not now; you have two years yet!" Surprise caused her to lower the pistol, and reflection caused her to desist, and finally to abandon the idea of suicide. As the two years have not yet expired, it is too early to know whether it is a case of prevision as well as of clairaudience.

One of the most remarkable cases of clairaudient warning against danger that has ever come under the observation of the writer occurred near Washington a short time ago. A well-known colored preacher was aboard a train on its way to the city. He was dozing in his seat a few miles out, when he was suddenly awakened by a cry of "Wreck! wreck!" apparently sounding in his ears. He thought for a moment that he had been dreaming; but after he was fully awake he again heard the same words repeated three times. As he happened to be the only occupant of the car, he knew that no one was playing a trick upon him, and he instantly became panic-stricken, and rushed to the rear end of the car and jumped off, although the train was going at the rate of thirty miles an hour. He was somewhat cut and bruised, but managed to walk to the next station, where he related his adventure to my informant. Little importance was attached to the circumstance at that time, as his train passed to the city in safety. But the very next train that passed over the road in the same direction was wrecked by the falling of a large rock upon it as it passed. The rock overhung the track, and had evidently become loosened by the vibrations caused by passing trains. Subsequent inves-

tigation by my informant revealed the fact that the old preacher had leaped from the train but a short distance beyond the scene of the wreck.

Now, it may be asked, how do we connect the clairaudient warning of the old man with the wreck which did not occur to his train? It must be admitted that the circumstances do not constitute an ideally perfect case of a life saved by a clairaudient reception of warning; but it must also be held that the case is of all the greater evidential value for that very reason. It is easy to perceive how the old man's subjective mind perceived the danger, when it is once admitted that it possesses the power to see that which is not within the range of objective vision. Ever alert for the safety of the individual, it perceived the danger, no matter how. It saw the condition of the overhanging rock, and believed that that train would loosen its hold. In the mean time the old man was in that passive, somnolent condition most favorable for the reception of subjective impressions or communications. He happened also to be clairaudient, and therefore in the best possible condition for the conveyance of subjective messages above the threshold of consciousness. And the message was delivered in the most effective way possible, — in the same way in which Socrates was again and again warned of impending danger. That the catastrophe did not happen to his train proves only that the intelligence which gave the warning was finite, that its knowledge was circumscribed by the limitations of human judgment, and that it did not proceed from Omniscience.

It may be here remarked that this incident seems difficult to explain on any other hypothesis than that of independent clairvoyance. To explain it on the principle of telepathy would involve the necessity of presupposing that some person or persons knew of the dangerous situation of the rock, and that they were in telepathic rapport with the percipient. Either supposition seems improbable, although not impossible. Be this as it may be, the fact remains that the subjective mind of man has some means of reaching out beyond

the range of our faculties of objective perception, and of knowing when and where danger threatens the individual. That it is constantly on the alert for that purpose, is also certain.

But its efforts are not directed exclusively to the protection of the body from harm. It is also on the alert for the protection of the material interests of the individual, and for the advancement of whatever aims and objects he has in life. These objects are, of course, subsidiary to the main one, being means to the end in view, — namely, the preservation of human life. One of the most eminent lawyers in the United States informs me confidentially that he is often guided, in critical emergencies, by a voice which gives him in a single, concise sentence the key to the situation. All the years of his adult life this voice has warned him of impending danger, and guided him to the attainment of the objects of his ambition. He did not, in early life, entertain any well-defined theory on the subject of the origin of the voice, but has always been guided by its monitions, and never to his disadvantage. Of late years, however, he has become convinced of its true source, and now regards his faculty as of the most transcendent interest and scientific importance, to say nothing of its value as a personal mentor.

It seems probable that the faculty might be cultivated to an unlimited extent, provided its true source could be recognized early in life and its monitions heeded. It is also probable that most people have occasionally heard clairaudiently, though but few have paid attention to the phenomenon; and those who have done so have either attributed it to imagination, or regarded it as a subjective hallucination. In either case the auto-suggestion would necessarily prevent the development of the faculty. It sometimes happens, however, that spirit mediums develop the faculty to a remarkable extent. As they attribute the phenomena to extraneous sources, the suggestion necessarily results in corresponding phenomena. It is needless to remark that the same law of suggestion which prevails in the production

of other phenomena governs the character of clairaudient manifestations. Thus, if the suggestion is entertained that the voice proceeds from a disembodied spirit, or from the guardian angel of the percipient, the character suggested will be assumed by the subjective entity, and future communications will be conducted on that basis. It may thus be made to assume the character of an angel or of a devil, just as the suggestion happens to be made. The suggestion, in the present state of knowledge on the subject of psychic phenomena, must depend altogether upon accident, or the education and habits of thought of the individual.

Doubtless, many persons have been made insane by constantly hearing what they supposed to be spirit voices. Not knowing the true origin of the phenomenon, they endow it with whatever character happens to suggest itself, and it readily assumes to be whatever is suggested; or it may assume a dozen different characters, if the person happens to imagine their existence. The effect can readily be conceived when one is persuaded that he is beset by supernatural beings. Insane people are often seen to be engaged in conversation with some imaginary person, and when we say of such a soliloquist, "He is talking to himself," we are wiser than we think; for that is the fact. But the individual thought he was in conversation with supernatural beings. We are accustomed to regard such conversations as symptoms of insanity, whereas they are oftentimes the cause of insanity. The patient for some reason develops the faculty of clairaudience. He imagines that the voice proceeds from some extraneous source. His superstition causes him to ascribe it to spirits. He constantly develops the faculty by practice, until he becomes a monomaniac on the subject. His subjective mind, dominated by an all-potent, but false, suggestion, gradually obtains control of the objective faculties, and Reason abdicates her throne. The man is insane, just as all men are insane who allow their subjective minds to obtain the ascendancy. This is, of course, an extreme case; but it is less rare than many suppose. Our asylums are full of men and women

who, in one way or another, are dominated by their subjective minds, acting in obedience to false suggestions which have been dwelt upon so long that reason is powerless to combat them.

The lesson is obvious. We should learn first of all that the subjective entity within each of us, whilst it is endowed with transcendent powers, is also circumscribed by limitations which unfit it for control of the dual man. Having learned this, it should be our care to keep reason in the ascendancy, and to control the subjective mind by suggestions which, while keeping it in subordination, will direct its powers in the channel of its legitimate functions, — namely, the preservation and perpetuation of the human species.

Clairaudient powers, like every other power which enables man to raise the operations of the subjective mind above the threshold of consciousness, may to one who knows the laws which govern it, who appreciates its powers, and who is aware of its limitations, become a source of decided advantage. But to one who does not understand those laws, powers, and limitations, those faculties may prove to be like the wand in the hand of the slave of the magician in the Eastern tale. He saw his master wave his wand, and heard him give orders to the spirits who arose at his command. The slave stole the wand, waved it in the air, and summoned the spirits. They came at his summons, but tore him in pieces instead of obeying his commands. He had not observed that his master used his left hand for the purpose of conjuration.

This tale was told for the purpose of illustrating the very point which we have sought to make. The fate of the magician's slave was no worse than that which may befall any man who irregularly summons his own spirit, without understanding the laws which enable him to control it and make it useful instead of destructive. He is conjuring with the most potential force of nature below that of Omnipotence.



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITISM (*continued*).

The Planchette. — Modifications. — Easily operated. — Automatic Writing. — Governed by the Universal Law. — The Planchette without Spirits. — The Planchette and Telepathy. — Trance. — Ancient and Modern Superstitions relating to Trance. — Religious Systems founded on Trance. — Visions. — Swedenborg. — Oriental Philosophy. — Its Slow Growth and Stupendous Proportions. — Spiritistic Philosophy. — Its Evolution. — All founded on Trance Visions in Ignorance of the Law of Suggestion. — Cahagnet's Mesmeric Seers. — Their Revelations. — Objective and Subjective Visions. — Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy. — Visions of the Holy Virgin. — The Physical and Mental Attitude of Prayer. — The Prayer of Faith. — Obsession. — Possession. — Casting out Devils. — Devils out of Fashion. — The Influence of Suggestion. — The Element of Telepathy. — Dual Personality. — Loss of Identity. — Characteristics. — The Case of Ansel Bourne. — Possible Explanation. — A Proof of the Dual Hypothesis. — Multiple Personality.

ANOTHER method of bringing the operations of the subjective mind above the threshold of consciousness is by means of an instrument called the planchette. It consists of a thin board about six inches square, resting upon two castors, the third leg consisting of a pencil, which passes through a hole in the board, its point resting upon the paper upon which the instrument is designed to write. The mode of operation consists in resting the hand lightly upon the board and allowing it to move over the paper without consciously aiding its progress. In the hands of a medium it will soon begin to write, apparently propelled by an unseen power. A modification of this apparatus is now