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APPARITIONS
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APPARITIONS
AND
THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE:

*AN EXAMINATION OF THE EVIDENCE
FOR TELEPATHY.*

BY
FRANK PODMORE, M.A.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages aim at presenting in brief compass a selection of the evidence upon which the hypothesis of thought-transference, or telepathy, is based. It is now more than twelve years since the Society for Psychical Research was founded, and nearly eight since the publication of *Phantasms of the Living*. Both in the periodical *Proceedings* of the Society and in the pages of Edmund Gurney's book,¹ a large mass of evidence has been laid before the public. But the papers included in the *Proceedings* are interspersed with other matter, some of it too technical for the taste of the general reader; whilst the two volumes of *Phantasms of the Living*, which have for some time

¹ The book actually bore on the title-page the names of Edmund Gurney, F. W. H. Myers, and the present writer. But the division of authorship, as explained in the Preface, was as follows :—“As regards the writing and the views expressed, Mr. Myers is solely responsible for the Introduction, and for the ‘Note on a Suggested Mode of Psychical Interaction;’ and Mr. Gurney is solely responsible for the remainder of the book. . . . But the collection, examination, and appraisal of evidence has been a joint labour.”

been out of print, were too costly for the purse of some, and too bulky for the patience of others. The attention which, notwithstanding these drawbacks, that work excited on its first appearance, the friendly reception which it met with in many quarters, and the fact that a considerable edition has been disposed of, encouraged the hope that a book on somewhat similar lines, but on a smaller scale, might be of service to those—and their number has probably increased within the last few years—who take a genuine interest in this inquiry. Accordingly in the autumn of 1892 I obtained permission from the Council of the Society for Psychological Research to make full use, in the compilation of the present work, not merely of the evidence already published by us, but of the not inconsiderable mass of unpublished records in the possession of the Society.

It will be seen that the present book has little claim to novelty of design; but it is not merely an abridged edition of the larger work referred to. On the one hand it has a somewhat wider scope, and includes accounts of telepathic clairvoyance and other phenomena which did not enter into the scheme of Mr. Gurney's book. On the other hand, the bulk of the illustrative cases here quoted have been taken from more recent records; and, in particular, certain branches of the experimental work have assumed a quite new importance within the last few years. Thus the experiments conducted by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick at Brighton have strengthened the demonstration of

thought-transference, and have gone far to solve one or two of the problems connected with the subject; and the evidence for the experimental production of telepathic effects at a distance has been greatly enlarged by the work of MM. Janet and Gibert,¹ Richet, Gibotteau, Schrenck-Notzing, and in this country by Mr. Kirk and others.² It may be added that some of the criticisms called forth by *Phantasms of the Living*, and our own further researches, have led us to modify our estimate of the evidence in some directions, and to strengthen generally the precautions taken against the unconscious warping of testimony.

To say, however, that the following pages owe much to Edmund Gurney is but to acknowledge the obligation which all students of the subject must recognise to his keen and vigorous intellect and his colossal industry. My own debt is a more personal one. To have worked under his guidance, and to have been stimulated by his example, was an invaluable schooling in the qualities demanded by an inquiry of this nature. Of the living, I owe grateful thanks, in the first instance, to Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, who have read through the whole of the book in typescript, and have given help and counsel throughout. Miss Alice Johnson, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, the late Dr. A. T. Myers, Miss Porter,

¹ Some account of the earlier experiments by MM. Janet and Gibert was included in the supplementary chapter at the end of the second volume of *Phantasms*.

² See Chapters V. and X. of the present book.

and others have also given me welcome help in various directions. In acknowledging this assistance, however, it is right to add that, though I trust in my estimate of the evidence presented, and in the general tenour of the conclusions suggested, to find myself, with few exceptions, in substantial agreement with my colleagues, yet I have no claim to represent the Society for Psychical Research, nor right to cloak my own shortcomings with the authority of others.

One word more needs to be said. The evidence, of which samples are presented in the following pages, is as yet hardly adequate for the establishment of telepathy as a fact in nature, and leaves much to be desired for the elucidation of the laws under which it operates. Any contributions to the problem, in the shape either of accounts of experiments, or of recent records of telepathic visions and similar experiences, will be gladly received by me on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, at 19 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C.

FRANK PODMORE.

August 1894.

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