DEATH AND ITS MYSTERY

CAMILLE FLAMMARION

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DEATH AND ITS MYSTERY
BEFORE DEATH

VOLUME I
PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL

BY
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CHAPTER 1. THE GREATEST OF PROBLEMS – CAN IT ACTUALLY BE SOLVED?

To be or not to be.

SHAKESPEARE.

ALTHOUGH I am not yet entirely satisfied with it, I have decided to offer today, to the attention of thinking men, a work begun more than half a century ago. The method of scientific experiment, which is the only method of value in the search for truth, lays requirements upon us that we cannot and ought not to avoid. The grave problem considered in this treatise is the most complex of all problems and concerns the general construction of the universe as well as of the human being – that microcosm of the great whole. In the days of our youth we begin these endless researches because we are full of confidence and see a long life stretching out before us. But the longest life passes, with its lights and shadows, like a dream. If we may form one wish in the course of this existence, it is to have been in some way of service to the slow but none the less real progress of humanity, that fantastic race, credulous and skeptical, virtuous and criminal, indifferent and curious, good and wicked, as well as incoherent and ignorant as a whole – barely out of the chrysalis wrappings of its animal state.

When the first edition of my book "La Pluralité des Mondes habites" were published (1862-64), a certain number of readers seemed to expect the natural sequel: "La Pluralité des existences de l'ame." If the first problem has been considered solved by my succeeding books ("Astronomie populaire," "La Planete Mars," "Uranie," "Stella," "Reves etoiles," etc.), the second has remained as open question,[1] and the survival of the soul, either in space or on other worlds or through earthly reincarnations, still confronts us as the most formidable of problems.

A thinking atom, borne on a material atom across the boundless space of the Milky Way, man may well ask himself if he is as insignificant in soul

[1] Although a distinguished writer, the philosopher Andre Pezzaani, who calls himself my disciple, published in 1865 *La Pluralité des existences de l'6me, conforme a la doctrine de la Pluralité des mondes*

as he is in body, if the law of progress can raise him in an indefinite ascent, and if there is a system of order in the moral world that is harmoniously associated with the order of the physical world.

Is not spirit superior to matter? What is our true nature? What is our future destiny? Are we merely ephemeral flames shining an instant to be forever extinguished? Shall we never see again those whom we have loved and who have gone before us into the Great Beyond? Are such separations eternal? Does everything in us die? If something remains, what becomes of this imponderable element – invisible, intangible, but conscious – which must constitute our lasting personality? Will it endure for long? Will it endure forever?

To be or not to be? Such is the great, the eternal question asked by all the philosophers, the thinkers, the seekers of all times and all creeds. Is death an end or a transformation? Do there exists proofs, evidences of survival of the human being after the destruction of the living organism? Until today the subject has remained outside the field of scientific observation. Is it possible to approach it by the principles of experimentation to which humanity owes all the progress that has been realized by science? Is the attempt logical? Are we not face to face with the mysteries of an invisible world that is different from that which lies before our senses and which cannot be penetrated by our methods of positive investigation? May we not essay, seek to find whether or not certain facts, if carefully and correctly observed, are susceptible of being scientifically analyzed and accepted as real by the severest criticism? We want no more fine words, no more metaphysics. Facts! Facts!

It is a question of our fate, our destiny, our personal future, our very existence.

It is not cold reason alone that demands an answer; it is not only the mind; it is our longings, our heart also.

It is childish and may appear conceited to bring one's own self upon the scene, but it is sometimes difficult to refrain from doing so; and as I have undertaken these laborious researches primarily in order to answer the questions of sorrowing hearts it seems to me that the most logical preface to this book will be furnished by some of those innumerable

confidential communications which have reached me during more than half a century, begging with anguish for the solution of the mystery.

Those who have never lost by death some one deeply loved have never sounded the depths of despair, have never bruised themselves against the closed door of the tomb. We seek, and an impenetrable wall rises inexorably before the terror that confronts us. I have received hundreds of earnest appeals that I should have liked to answer. Should I make these confidences known? I have hesitated a long time. But there are so many of them, they reflect so faithfully the intense desire that exists to reach a solution, that it has now become a matter of general interest and my duty is clear. These expressions of feeling are the natural introduction to this work, for it is they that have decided me to write it. Nevertheless, I must apologize for reproducing these pages without alteration; for if they reveal the very souls of their sensitive authors, they also express themselves about me in terms of praise that it might well seem immodest on my part to publish. But this is only a personal detail, and consequently insignificant, especially as an astronomer, who realizes that he is an atom before the infinite and eternal universe, is inaccessible to and hermetically sealed against feelings of worldly vanity. Those who know me have considered me for many long years. My absolute indifference to all honors has abundantly proved this true. Whether I am considered great or insignificant, whether I am praised or criticized, I remain the distant spectator.

The following letter was written me by a distracted mother and has been reproduced literally. It shows how well worth while it would be at least to attempt to relieve suffering humanity. It is more than the science of doctoring the body, it is the science of healing the soul that must be created.

To Our Great Flammarion

Reinosa, Spain, March 30, 1907.

Monsieur:

I wish I might cling to your knees and kiss your feet while I beseech you to hear me and not reject my prayer. I cannot, I know not how to express myself. I wish I might arouse your pity, might interest you in my grief, but I should have to see you, to tell you myself of my own

unhappiness, to paint the horror of what is passing in my soul, and then you could not deny me an immense compassion. What I have had to suffer before I could bring myself to commit this act of daring and indiscretion that resembles madness! Whence came the idea of addressing myself to our illustrious Flammarion, of asking him to console an unknown person who has no other claim upon his kindness than that of a fellow-countrywoman? It is because I am suffering! I have just lost a son, an only son. I am a widow and my only happiness consisted in this son and one daughter. Monsieur Flammarion, you would have had to know the beloved child I have just lost, to understand. I should have to tell you the story of the thirty-three years of his existence: then you would understand.

When at five years of age he was given up by all the celebrated physicians of Paris and Madrid, because of hip trouble, my poor husband and I sacrificed a brilliant position at Madrid and buried ourselves in a lonely country district in Spain in order to save this little boy who was the object of our devotion. For eight years he was ill and he was left lame! What he cost me in anxiety, care, sorrow, sleepless nights, anguish, and sacrifices it would be impossible to explain. But how dear and lovable he was! Brought up in a little carriage, petted and caressed, he was the most adorable child one could imagine. Oh, that childhood! How I wish I could get it back! At twelve years of age he no longer suffered from his leg, but he could not walk without crutches. What a grief this was to me, who had brought him into the world strong and well made! Later, at seventeen, he walked with only one crutch and a cane. At twenty, he was as handsome a lad as could be seen anywhere. If I dared, I would send you his photograph, so that you might see that my mother's love exaggerates nothing. Everyone felt his charm; he had that gift of pleasing which can be neither defined nor explained. Men, women, children, old and young were charmed by I know not what that radiated from his person. Wherever I went with him, I was congratulated on the beauty and goodness of my son. People envied him. Ah! That was because he was as beautiful as he was good! His soul was all nobility, grandeur, generosity. Intelligent and spiritual, even-tempered and sweet in his disposition as he was, life with him was a heavenly dream, a continual enchantment. You will realize what this meant, Monsieur, when I tell you that at twenty he

developed cystitis, which was certainly a return of the first trouble in his leg, and that this cystitis was the beginning of a whole chain of suffering of which only hell could give you any idea. I cannot understand how God, our Creator, can permit the human body to be so martyrized. Above all, when this martyrdom is inflicted on a good and innocent being like my son. All the great specialists were consulted again, but alas! none of them was able to cure him. He spent thirteen years alternating between periods of better and worse, preserving, in the midst of the most atrocious suffering, his sweetness, his goodness and even his gaiety, so as not to sadden others.

For the past four years he has scarcely suffered at all, and last year he was so much better that he believed he was cured. My poor husband had died in 1902. From that time my son had been the head of our little family: mother, sister, and himself. How happy we were!

Although we were obliged to work to supply our needs, life appeared very beautiful to us! My daughter had never wished to marry, so that she might devote herself to her brother, whom she adored. I was so happy in the love I saw that my children bore each other that I no longer feared death for myself, as I knew I should leave them together, not to be separated as long as they lived, living each for the other. And how shall I describe to you the tenderness of my son for his mother, of this mother for her son? Seek in heaven among the angels; seek above, among those worlds to which your gaze penetrates; seek among all the best and sweetest things that love can produce, and you will have only a feeble idea of the filial and the maternal love of these two. I dare not think of it. I dare not remember his eyes, his voice, when he looked at me and said, "Darling Mother!"

Last August it was proposed to him that he should visit a mine (he had acquired a taste for this kind of work and had been occupied with it for some time). He wished to take me with him. When we had reached a certain spot we were told that we should have to go on horseback to reach the mine. As I knew he had been forbidden to ride on horseback, because of his bladder, I refused; but my son assured me he felt certain he could make this trip without danger. We hesitated; we discussed it; I yielded.

Ah! Why can we never retrace our steps! This excursion so tired my son that he fell ill of gastric fever. He was in the hands of stupid and ignorant physicians who knew nothing of his condition and who let the months slip by while they said that nothing was the matter! A tumor attacked the bladder, the walls could not endure the strain: the bladder burst!

The tortures of hell are nothing to the tortures suffered by my unhappy son! A celebrated surgeon was called in. he did not arrive until twenty-two hours after the accident. My child had made all his preparations for leaving this world. They operated, but all hope was gone. The poor boy survived the operation for thirteen days; the surgeon had given him only twenty-four hours more. But my son, who understood his mother's and sister's grief, resisted, fighting bravely in spite of everything. What days, Monsieur! They gave us the measure of his greatness of soul.

Thinking only of us, of the consequences of his death to two women who would remain alone and without support in a foreign country, who would always mourn an adored son and brother, he tried in all ways to soften the horror of this situation. What he said to us in those supreme moments were the words not of a young man of thirty-three but of a saint, an angel, a superhuman being! Oh, that face tortured by suffering! Those eyes that seemed to see something of another world! And his mouth, twisted by pain, still trying to smile, his hand pressed mine as he said: "Good-bye, darling Mother, good-bye! I have loved you so dearly! Do not forget me! Oh! Almighty God," he said, "you did not lay so much on your son, on your own son, who was God, and I, who am only a poor man, you give ten times more to bear. Oh! death! in pity, death! If you love me, ask God to send me to death!"

For thirteen days and longer!

Oh, Flammarion! have pity on me! In the name of your mother, be merciful! I am mad with grief. It is thirty-two days since he died and I have not slept ten hours since. At night I sit up until four in the morning, and when fatigue has conquered me I throw myself, entirely clothed, on my bed and shut my eyes, but a fixed idea continues during this painful sleep; I do not lose my memories for a single instant, and when I open my eyes I am obsessed by them all day long; what I suffer

is so frightful, so atrocious that I ask myself if hell is not preferable to what I endure. Is it possible that it can be God who has created beings destined to experience such horrors!

You, an astronomer and a thinker, who weigh the suns and the worlds, you whose glance penetrates those mysterious regions among which our spirits loses itself, tell me, I beg you on my knees, tell me if our souls survive somewhere. If I can preserve the hope of seeing my son again, if he sees me. If there exists any way of communicating with him.

You who know so many things about the heavens, about spirits, about the marvels of the universe, I ask you in pity to tell me something that can leave my wounded, tortured heart a ray of hope, however feeble! You cannot understand the excess of my grief. I wish that I might die of it. I hope to die, but - my daughter is here, who beseeches me to live, not to leave her alone in the world; and then I see myself forced to live and forced to suffer! What horror! When I think that in an instant I could put an end to my misery! If it were possible to weigh grief, to measure it as you measure the worlds, the weight would be heavy, the extent so great that you would be frightened to think that one human soul could reach such a degree of torture: there must be something infernal in my destiny! Neither red-hot irons nor pincers could cause such suffering! My son, my beloved child! I want him, I wish to see him! I desire no heaven without him. Oh! my adored Emanuel! flesh of my flesh! joy of my life! my happiness as a mother lost forever! Is there a God? is it he who permits these horrors on earth? Monsieur Flammarion, in pity, in the name of those you love and who love you, do not be insensible to the greatest human grief that has ever torn an heart! you who know! We simple mortals can neither know nor understand. Tell me if souls survive somewhere, if they remember, if they still love those who remain on earth; if they see us, if we can call them near us.

Ah! If I could see you and fall at your knees! Forgive this mad act. I no longer know whether I dream or wake! I feel only one thing, a grief so sharp that it seems like a red-hot iron, continually plunged into a gaping wound.

Forgive me, Monsieur Flammarion! Your suns and stars, so beautiful and so marvelous, do not feel or suffer. And I feel a grief greater than all the worlds that move in space! So small, so unimportant a thing,

and yet to feel so intolerable a grief! What can it be? What is this mystery? A being so feeble and limited - and to suffer so!

Forgive me once more, Master, in the name of your mother! Forgive me and pity your unhappy countrywoman,

N. Boffard,

At Reinosa, Province of Santander, Spain.

So runs this letter, full of anguish, which I reproduce literally, in order to show all the horror of such a situation. I repeat that I must apologize for the dithyrambic that concern me. Their only significance is in so clearly revealing this immense grief joined to the ardent hope of seeing these clouds dispersed.

One would have to possess a heart of stone to be untouched by these heart-rendering appeals of mother love, to remain deaf to the anguish of such despair, and not to feel an ardent desire to consecrate one's life to bringing some relief.

Priests receive appeals of this sort every day, because they are considered ministers of God, endowed with the power of penetrating the riddle of the supernatural and solving it. They answer such grief with the consolations of religion. The priest speaks in the name of Faith and Revelation; but faith cannot be imposed, it is not even as generally held as we imagine. I know priests, bishops, and cardinal who are without it, even while they teach it as a social necessity. There are a hundred different religions on earth, all of them perhaps useful, but unacceptable from the point of view of philosophy. Face to face with such events as I have just related, are their ministers able to convince us that a just and good God rules over humanity? The man of science is seated neither on the bench of the confessional nor in the bishop's chair, and he can tell only what he knows. He is honest, frank, independent, rational before everything. His duty is research and study. We are still seeking and we do not pretend to have found the answer, still less to have a revelation of the truth from heaven. That was the only answer I was able to give the unknown woman, even while I left her the hope of someday seeing her son again in the meantime of remaining in spiritual relationship with him. But I do not, like Auguste Comte, Saint-Simon, or Enfantin, imagine myself the high priest of a new religion. Nevertheless, there can

be no doubt that the universal religion of the future will be founded upon science and especially upon astronomy, associated with the knowledge of physics.

Let us make our search humbly and all together. I must excuse myself again for having reproduced the expressions of praise in this letter, but to suppress them would be to suppress at the same time the expression of this distress, this confidence and this hope.

The loss of a son inspired the preceding letter; the loss of a daughter inspired the following.

Theil-sur-Vanne, November, 1899.

Master:

I have the honor of knowing you through your works well enough to be sure that you are kind and to hope that, although I am unknown to you, you will be willing to read with indulgence what I write and will pity my misfortune while according me your spiritual help, of which I have such great need.

On the nineteenth of last September I had the unspeakable sorrow of losing a charming child sixteen and a half years old, of great intelligence and an exquisite delicacy of feeling, and oh! how beautiful! She seemed an incorporeal being, so ideally lovely were her chaste, graceful body and her angelic face. My sweet darling, with her large, magnificent eyes full of expression, framed with lashes as dark as her delicately arched eyebrows, her nose a little long but fine and straight, her mouth somewhat large but expressing much goodness, her face a soft oval, the color of a lovely lily. A dear little dimple in her chin gave beauty to her smile and lighted up a face that was usually rather serious.

A splendid mass of light auburn hair, naturally curly, delicately waved, graced her virginal forehead like a golden foam; her eyes were dear little shells which you divined, hidden in the mass of her fine hair, little nests for kisses, upon which I can no longer place my lips, hungry with tenderness. My dearly loved daughter is no more. My eyes can no longer rest in affection upon her charming, beautiful face; I can only weep for her. So many moral and physical perfections brutally, cruelly,

stupidly, savagely blotted out! Pitiless death has taken everything from me. My Renee, my beloved - I have her no longer, and I go on living. Life! - what a prison!

And with her have vanished our good talks. They are ended now - all our wonderful conversations on the most abstruse questions of the life beyond, for although she was young, my daughter was a thoughtful girl, a precious friend, my confidante and dearly loved companion. She was everything to me, this pure and lovely flower, cut down before her full and perfect blooming. Why? What a problem!

Since then, I have thought of suicide as a way of rejoining her, but (did this intuition come from her approaching end?) the evening before her death, while her arms were about me, she said coaxingly, "Mamma must not commit suicide; she must wait, mustn't she?" I was completely taken aback and I did not understand until the next day when, white as a lily, she gave me her last kiss and closed her eyes forever. Ah! that last kiss! she put all that remained of her life into it. What moments! What tortures! Supreme, never-to-be-forgotten hours! I still see her. I love my suffering. I see my dear little dead girl who had felt, who had guessed my despair: she wished me to remain to weep for her. My revolt against everybody and everything; I find myself murmuring against God Himself, who has taken from me what is a thousand times dearer than my life. from this time on I can live only in the memory of her - my daughter, my constant thought - she was my religion, I adored her. If it is possible, I should like to find some consolation in spiritism, to take refuge in it with faith, hope, and love.

But I know so little about these matters.

My husband and I have tried to experiment with a table, alas! without results, although we did everything to insure success - placing on the table the photograph of our dear child, one of her curls, a page of her writing - and although we evoked her with all the strength of our will. But our tears, our calls, our longings were all useless. I wish to go on, to persevere, and it is toward this end, dear and illustrious Master, with your help, I cannot tell you what this never-failing source of consolation would mean to me. You would mingle in my thoughts with my daughter and God.

Reading your admirable works has made me think of placing my hope in you, feeling sure that you will be able to do as I ask and will be willing to receive kindly the prayer of a poor mother who lives only in the hope of finding once more the child who, as you believe, has vanished but is not dead. Extend your kindness to this sad and ignorant mother. You who have light, lighten her darkness, help her in her moral distress: it is the most beautiful gift of charity that can be given. My greatest desire to fathom these mysteries does not spring from vain curiosity; it is a real, a unique, a potent need from which death alone can deliver me. I await your answer with confidence, but also with impatience, and should you think it wise, I will gladly go to Paris or wherever you advise me.

Be good enough to receive, Monsieur and illustrious scientist, my thanks in anticipation and the warmest greetings of your servant,

R. Primault.

I have reproduced this letter, like the former,[2] without modification, and without suppressing the words of praise addressed to me. As I have already said, the sensations of childish vanity are unknown to me and for more than half a century I have grown used to titles that no longer have any significance for me. The absolute conviction of an astronomer is that we are all atoms of the utmost insignificance. But these expressions of admiration from an author's readers, whoever he may be, explain the confidence and the faith expressed and should be respected.

Alas! scientific honesty obliges us to say only what we know. We have no right to deceive any one, even from the best of motives and in order to offer him a transitory happiness. I could not give absolute certainty to that poor mother. That was twenty years ago. Since then I have never ceased to search along the same path. This book is written to set forth the elements of a solution.

I have allowed myself to produce literally the touching letter of my unknown correspondent because it expresses the grief of all mothers who have lost a child, of all those who have lost some one dearly loved

[2] The letters reproduced here are preserved in the files of my research into psychic phenomena which I opened in 1899. (See L'Inconnu, p. 88.) This one is No. 809. The preceding one is No. 1730. The originals may always be referred to.

and whom the very term “Just God” seems an insult to reality. We can easily understand the revolt of these souls. I possess other letters that are incomparably more severe with all the false consolations of religion, that have been sent me by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, spiritualists of all beliefs, free-thinkers, materialists, atheists, taking as a text the injustice which we see about us, in order to deny the existence of an intelligent Principle in the organization of the world. Men often console themselves with skepticism, by submission to the inevitable, by convincing themselves of the indifference of nature to human efforts. Women will not do this, they will not resign themselves. They will not accept nothingness. They feel that there exists something unknown but real, they wish to know.

Hardly a week passes but I receive letters of this sort.

But what is the universal intelligence? We have a tendency to believe that God thinks as we do and that our sense of justice corresponds with His; that His thought is of the same nature as our own, although infinitely superior to it. It is perhaps something entirely different. The insect thinks dully when it forms the chrysalis and also when it bursts this envelop to spread the wings it has acquired; perhaps our thoughts is as far removed from the thought of God as that of the caterpillar is from our own. We are surrounded by mystery.

But our duty is to search.

During the infamous German war, which has cut down, in the flower of their youth, fifteen million young men who had the right to life, who had been brought up by their fathers and their mothers often at a price of enormous sacrifices, letters reached me by the hundred, denouncing the barbarity and injustice of human institutions, lamenting that the hatred of war, which a group of humanity’s friends have preached for so long, should not have been understood by rulers; revolting against God, Who permits such frightful destruction, and declaring that their lives had been shattered by the irreparable loss of those they loved.

More than ever the frightful problem of our destiny rises before us. Is it really insoluble? Cannot the veil be pushed aside, lifted, if only for a moment? Alas! The religions which have all sprung from this heartfelt need, this desire to understand, this grief at seeing before us the mute

body of someone dearly loved, have not brought with them the proofs they promised. The finest theological discussions prove nothing. We do not want words but demonstrable facts. Death is the profoundest subject that has ever occupied the thoughts of men, the supreme problem of all times and all peoples. It is the inevitable end toward which we all tend; it is a part of the law of our existence, as important as birth. They are both natural transitions in the general evolution, and yet, for all that, death, which is just as natural as birth, seems to us to be against nature.

Hope in the continuation of life is innate in human nature. It belongs to all periods and all peoples. The development of science plays no part in this universal belief, which rests on personal aspiration and which nevertheless is not based on positive foundations. That is a fact that it is valuable to state.

Sentiment is not a negligible quantity, equal to zero, its scientific coefficient.

The two letters already reproduced from a part of a series that I began to collect long ago and with which my readers are already familiar. The number of letters received, recorded, and included in this collection of documents, of observations, of investigations, of questions that have arisen since the inquiry began, in 1899 (see my work "L'Inconnu et les problemes psychiques," p. 90), have reached the figure 4106, to which I ought to add about 500 that reached me before I began the inquiry.

I could quote her hundreds of others, very much like the two preceding. Here is one which may seem striking, in another respect, to more than one reader. It is a fervent prayer, which was sent to me at La Rochelle, the fifteenth of August, 1904. it is somewhat brutal, but I give it complete, as I gave the others.

My Elder Brother:

Both my eyes are suffering from cataract, but nevertheless I must write to you. I am a skeptic, a hardened scoffer, but I must believe in something. A frightful, irreparable catastrophe has just crushed the lives of four people. My daughter, whose charm, simplicity and gaiety in 1902 had delighted all Rochefort, beginning with the mothers of those girls who were her rivals, has just gone to a madhouse in Niort, where she vegetates, waiting for the end. It was eighteen months'

agony for her, the martyr, and for her poor mother, who took her to Paris, to Bordeaux, to Saujon, where ambitious specialists demonstrated the utter powerlessness of their pretended science, - an agony also for me, alone here, and for my son, victims of the same catastrophe. I am haunted by the thought of suicide. My brain beats out this refrain: "Your daughter is mad!" and I think of the general misery, of the immense fraud that life is for the great majority of human beings. We carry with us from our birth the defects of our ancestors. What can become of our personality, paralyzed, stuck fast in the carnal magma? This magma, by the play of its molecules, by the example of the parents' education, by the manner of life forced upon us, by the physical and moral condition of the father and mother, this matrix will be the all-powerful director of the destiny of the personality that has just become incarnate, or rather that has just been merged into an aggregate of which it will be the slave, all its life. what does this all mean?

The gross ignorance and degrading stupidities uttered in the pulpits of the Church have ended by revolting me. But I should like to believe in something acceptable. The spiritualists, with their naive credulity, are really too silly, also. They have given me pages of Pythagoras, Buddha, Abelard, Fenelon, Robespierre which are lacking in common sense. It is grotesque.

For thirty-three years I have not cared to read. The blow that has fallen on me made me pick up some books in which I hoped to find what I seek. In short, here is "L'Inconnu"!

Shall I confess that I have read it religiously? I admit on principle the manifestations and apparitions you mention, as, for example, the story of Marie de Thilo's cat (page 166). The fear of the cat, which must have seen the phantom, seems to have been due to some electrical excitation. But, Monsieur, my elder brother, why do you see in these dying things only the dying?

There is nothing to prove that the last sigh, the last human thought of the one who is passing should be the cause of manifestations produced without his knowledge. Would it not, on the contrary, be a question of the first step in the world beyond, at the moment of the rupture with the flesh?

I surely belong to the great number of your unknown friends, of those who sympathize with you. They are awaiting, at present, a final book that will conclude your physical investigations. Spirits? Mediums? What have you been able to prove, to verify scientifically, as an astronomer and a mathematician for whom two and two make four and not five? In a word, with your universally recognized authority, what conclusion have you reached? We wish to know. And it is the part of a man such as you to enlighten so many eager minds. And do not think that I am burning incense before you when I speak this way. That is not one of my failings. Are you not going to make up your mind to it? You have no right to conceal anything. Ah! what a service you would render us in writing this honest, convincing book! We have enough of evangelical sermons, of the dissertations of mediums, of neuroses, of claptrap. We beg you, tell us what you know."

(Letter 1465).

It will be easily understood that I cannot reveal the author of this letter, who is a high official on the Government.

It will also be understood that I should not wish to publish this work until I believed it had attained the dignity of its important subject. It was already under way at the time of this request, in 1904; it had even been begun in 1861, as one can judge from my Memoirs. Such works as these cannot be written out in a year.

Besides, if I had replied to all these appeals I should have written not one book but a dozen. Will they ever see the light? As some of them have been well started for nearly a quarter of a century, they are on the road to being finished.

But let us begin with this one. My readers have assisted me greatly in this research by sending me for many years such observations as helped to prepare the solution; - the solution that has been demanded with perhaps too much confidence. Can our efforts succeed in throwing some light upon this darkness of ages that surrounds the problem of death?

In my childhood, during lessons in philosophy and religious instruction in school, I often heard a discourse, given periodically, which took as text the four words: "Porro unum est necessarium," or in English, "one single thing is necessary." This single thing was the salvation of our souls. The

lecturer spoke to us of the wars of Alexander, of Caesar, of Napoleon, and arrived at this conclusion: “What does a man profit, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” they described to us also the flames of hell, and they terrified us with frightful pictures representing the damned, tortured devils in an inextinguishable fire which burned them without consuming them, for all eternity. The subject of the text retains its value, whatever may be one’s beliefs. It cannot be disputed that the one all-important point for us is to know what fate is reserved for us after our last breath. “To be or not to be!” That scene in “Hamlet” is repeated every day. The life of a thinking man is a meditation upon death.

If the existence of human beings leads to nothing, what is all this comedy about?

Whether we face it boldly, or whether we avoid the image of it, Death is the supreme event of Life. To be unwilling to consider it is a bit of childish silliness, as the precipice is before us and as we shall inevitably fall into it someday. To imagine that the problem is insoluble, that we can know nothing about it and shall only be wasting our time if, with daring curiosity, we try to see clearly, - that is an excuse dictated by a careless laziness and an unjustified timidity.

The funeral aspect of death is due, above all, to what surrounds it, to the mourning that accompanies it, to the religious ceremonies that envelop it, to the Dies Irae, to the De Profundis. Who knows if the despair of those who are left behind would not give place to hope if we had the courage to examine this last phase of our earthly life with the same pains that we bring to an astronomical or a psychological observation? Who knows if the prayers of the dying would not give place to the serenity of the rainbow after the storm?

It is hard not to desire an answer to the formidable question that presents itself when we think of our destiny, or when a cruel death has taken from us someone we love. How is it possible not to ask whether or not we shall find each other again, or if the separation is for eternity? Does a Deity or Goodness exist? Do injustice and evil rule over the progress of humanity, with no regard for the feelings that nature has placed in our hearts? And what is this nature itself? Has it a will, and end? Could there be more intelligence, more justice, more goodness, and

more inspiration in our infinitesimally small minds than in the great universe? How many questions are associated with the same enigma!

We shall die; nothing is more certain. When the earth on which we live shall have turned only a hundred times more around the sun, not one if us, dear readers, will still be of this world.

Ought we to fear death for ourselves, or for those whom we love?

“Horror of death” is a senseless expression. One of two things is true: either we shall die wholly, or we shall continue to exist beyond the grave. If we die wholly we shall never know anything about it; consequently we shall not feel it. If we continue to exist, the subject is worth examining.

Someday our bodies will cease to live: there is not the least doubt on this point. They will resolve themselves into millions of molecules, which will later he reincorporated in other organisms of plants, animals, and men; the resurrection of the body is an outworn dogma that can no longer be accepted by anyone. If our thought, our psychic entity survives the dissolution of the material organism, we shall have the joy of continuing to live, because our conscious life will continue under another mode of existence that is superior to this. It must be superior, for progress is a law of nature that manifests itself throughout the whole history of the earth, the only planet that we are able to study directly.

As concerns this great problem, we can say with Marcus Aurelius: “What is death? if we consider it in itself, if we separate it from the images with which we have surrounded it, we see that it is only a work of nature. But whoever fears a work of nature is still a child.”

Francis Bacon merely repeated the same thought when he said: “The ceremonies of death are more terrifying than death itself.”

“True philosophy,” wrote the wise Roman emperor, “is to await death with a tranquil heart and see in it only the dissolution of those elements of which each being is composed. That is according to nature, and nothing is evil which conforms to nature.”

But the stoicism of Epictetus, of Marcus Aurelius, of the Arabs, the Muslims, and the Buddhists does not satisfy us: we wish to know.

And besides, whether or not nature ever does anything wrong is a debatable question.

No thinking man can avoid being troubled in his hours of personal reflection by this question: “What will become of me? Shall I die wholly?”

It has been said, not without apparent reason, that this is on our part a matter of naive vanity. We attribute a certain importance to ourselves; we imagine it would be a pity for us to cease to exist; we suppose that God occupies Himself with us, and that we are not a negligible quantity in creation. Assuredly, especially when we speak astronomically, we are no great matter; and even the whole of humanity itself is likewise of little importance. We can no longer reason today as in the time of Pascal; the geocentric and anthropocentric system no longer exists. Lost atoms on another atom, itself lost in the infinite! But at any rate we exist, we think, and ever since men have thought they have asked themselves the same questions to which the most varied religions have attempted to rely, without any of them, however, having succeeded.

The mystery before which we have raised so many altars and so many statues of the gods, is still there, as formidable as in the times of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Christians of the Middle Ages. The anthropomorphic and the anthropophagic gods have crumbled away. Their religions have vanished, but the religion remains - the research into the conditions of immortality. Are we blotted out by death, or shall we continue to exist?

Francis Bacon, more popular and celebrated than Roger Bacon, but without his genius, had, in laying down the foundations of scientific experiment, foreseen the progressive victory of observation and experience, the triumph of fact, judiciously established according to theories, in all the domains of human study except one, that of “divine matters,” of the supernatural,” which he abandoned to religious authority and to Faith. This was an error in which a certain number of learned me still actually persist. There is no valid reason for not studying everything, for not submitting everything to the test of positive analysis, and we shall never know anything that we have not learned. If Theology has been mistaken in pretending that these subjects were reserved for

her, Science has been equally mistaken in disdaining them as unworthy or foreign to her mission.

The problem with the immortality of the soul has not yet been solved in the affirmative, but neither has it yet been solved in the negative, as has sometimes been pretended.

It is the general tendency to believe that the solution of the sphinx's riddle of what lies beyond the grave is out of our reach, and that the human mind has not the power to pierce this mystery. Nevertheless, what subject concerns us more closely, and how can we fail to be interested in our own lot?

The persistent study of this great problem leads us to believe, today, that the mystery of death is less obscure and impenetrable than has been admitted hitherto, and that it may become clear to the mind's eye by the light of certain actual experiments that were unknown half a century ago.

It ought not to surprise us to find physical research associated with astronomical research. It is the same problem. The physical and moral world are one. Astronomy has always been associated with religion. The errors of that ancient science, which was founded on deceptive appearances, had their inevitable consequences in the erroneous beliefs of former days; the theological heaven must accord with the astronomical heaven under pain of collapse. The duty of all honest men is to seek loyally after truth.

In our epoch of free discussion, science can only study tranquility, with complete independence, the gravest of problems. We can remember, however, - not without some bitterness, - that during the intolerant centuries of the Inquisition, inquiries of free thought brought their disciples to the scaffold. Thousands of men have been burned alive for their opinions: the statue of Giordano Bruno reminds us of this, even in Rome. Can we pass before it or before that of Savonarola in Florence or that of Etienne Dolet in Paris, without feeling a shiver of horror at religious intolerance? And Vanini, burned at Toulouse! And Michael Servetus, burned at Geneva by Calvin!

We once affirmed things of which we were ignorant; we imposed silence upon all seekers. This is what has above all retarded the psychic sciences. Undoubtedly this study is not indispensable to a practical life. Men in

general are stupid. Not one out of a hundred of them thinks. They live on the earth without knowing where they are and without having the curiosity even to wonder. They are brutes that eat, drink, enjoy themselves, reproduce their kind, sleep, and are occupied above everything in acquiring money. I have had, during an already long life, the joy of spreading among the different classes of all humanity, in all countries and all languages, the basic ideas of astronomical knowledge, and I am in a position to know the proportion of those who are interested in understanding the world which they inhabit and of forming a rudimentary idea of the marvels of creation. Out of the sixteen hundred million human beings who inhabit our planet there are about a million interested in such things, that is to say, who read astronomical books, out of curiosity or otherwise. As for those who study and make themselves personally familiar with the science, who keep up with the new discoveries by reading special and yearly publications, their number can be placed at about fifty thousand for the entire world, of which six thousand are in France.

We can therefore conclude that out of every sixteen hundred human beings there is one who knows vaguely what world he inhabits, and out of a hundred and sixty thousand there is one really well informed.

As for the instruction in astronomy in primary and secondary schools, in college and lyceums, either civil or ecclesiastical, it virtually amounts to nothing. In the matter of positive psychology the results are equally negligible. Universal ignorance is the law of our mundane humanity, from the days of its simian birth.

The deplorable conditions of life on our planet, the obligation to eat, the necessities of material existence, explain the indifference to philosophy on the part of the earth's inhabitants, without entirely excusing them; for millions of men and women find the time to indulge in futile amusements, to read newspapers and novels, to play cards, to occupy themselves with the affairs of others, to pass along the old story of the mote and the beam, to criticize and spy upon those about them, to dabble in politics, to fill the churches and the theaters, to support luxurious shops, to overwork the dressmakers and hatmakers, etc.

Universal ignorance is the result of that miserable human individualism that is so self-sufficient. The need of living by the spirit is felt by no one.

Men who think are the exception. If these researches lead us to employ our minds better, to find what we are here to do, on this earth, we may be satisfied with this work; for, truly, out life as human beings seems very obscure.

The inhabitant of earth is still so unintelligent and so bestial that everywhere, even up to the present day, it is still might that makes right and upholds it; the leading statesman of each nation is still the Minister of War, and nine tenths of the financial wealth of the peoples is consecrated to periodic international butcheries.

And Death continues to reign over the destinies of humanity!

She is indeed the sovereign. Her scepter has never exercised its controlling power with such ferocious and savage violence as in these last years. By mowing down millions of men on the battlefield she has raised millions of questions to be addressed to Destiny. Let us study it, this final end. It is a subject well worthy of our attention.

The plan of this work is outlined by its aim: to establish the positive proofs of survival. It will contain neither literary dissertations nor fine poetic phrases, nor more or less captivating theories, nor hypotheses, but only the facts of observation, with their logical deductions.

Are we to die wholly? That is the question. What will remain of us? To say, to believe that our immortality rests with our descendants, depends on our works, on the way in which we have helped humanity, is a mere jest. If we die wholly, we shall know nothing of these services we have rendered, and our planet will come to an end and humanity will perish. This everything will be utterly destroyed.

In order to discover if the soul survives the body we must first find out if it exists in itself, independently of the physical organism. We must therefore establish this existence on the scientific basis of definite observation and not on the fine phrases and the ontological arguments with which, up to the present, theologians of all times have been satisfied. And first of all we must take into account the insufficiency of the theories of physiology, as they are generally accepted and conventionally taught.

Chapter 2. Materialism – An Erroneous, Incomplete, And Insufficient Doctrine

We should distrust appearances.

Copernicus.

Every one is familiar with the Positive philosophy of Auguste Comte and his judicious classification of the sciences, descending gradually from the universe of man to astronomy and biology. Every one is also familiar with Littre, the follower of Auguste Comte; his dictionary is on all the libraries and his works are scattered broadcast. I used to know him personally. He was an eminent savant, an encyclopedia, a profound thinker; in addition, a convinced materialist and atheist. The beauty of his face did not correspond to the beauty of his soul. It was difficult to look at him without thinking of our simian origin, and yet he had the greatest nobility of mind and a rare generosity of heart. he lived not very far from the Observatoire. His wife was very pious, and on Sunday he used to escort her to mass at Saint-Sulpice, out of pure and simple goodness, without ever entering the church himself. Le Dantec, atheist and materialist, who succeeded him, let himself be buried with the rites of the church, though this is to be regretted, in order not to pain his wife, who also was very pious, - we should like to see these lifelong companions of the same minds as their husbands. This professor of atheism also was very good. All this is rather paradoxical. The same was true of Jules Soury, that “devourer of cures,” who was buried by them with their liturgies. There is no real logic in this world. But one’s doctrines do not always direct one’s deeds. One can be professing Catholic and yet a liar, or one who takes advantage of others. One can be a materialist and an entirely honest man. I also knew the excellent Ernest Renan, who, out of deep sincerity and in order to absolve himself from all hypocrisy, had refused the priesthood to which his theological studies had led him.

These eminent minds are much to be respected in their sincere opinions, which we should respect as they respected the opinions of others; but we

may take exception to their ideas, and moreover they never made any pretense to infallibility.

Littre worked over the psychological questions that we are proposing to study here. We may take his arguments, as well as those of Taine, his emulator, as a basis for the modern materialistic assertions. Do not let us fear to meet them directly and to take the bull by the horns.

In his work entitled “La science au point de vue philosphique,” a chapter on psychic physiology contains the following statements:

Perhaps the expression psychic physiology may appear anomalous. I could have made use of the term psychology, which is used to designate the study of the intellectual and moral faculties. I myself have used this word many times in my writings, and because of its common usage and when the text leaves no room for obscurity in my thought, I shall use it again. It is true that the word (yo%n) which is its root, is suited to metaphysics and theology, but it can also be applied to physiology by giving it the meaning of the totality of the intellectual and moral faculties, - a phrase much too long and complex not to be replaces, on most occasions, by some simpler expression.

Nevertheless, as psychology was undoubtedly at its beginning, and still is, the study of the mind, considered independently of the nervous substance, I neither wish to nor ought to use an expression which is peculiar to a philosophy quite different from that which lends it name to the exact sciences. Among the positive sciences one recognizes no quality without matter, not at all because a priori one has the preconceived idea that there exists no independent spiritual substance, but because, a posteriori, we have never met with gravitation except in a body possessing weight, nor with the heat except in a warm body, nor with chemical affinities without substances that may be combined, nor with life, feeling, or thought except in a living, feeling, thinking being.

It has seemed necessary to me for the word physiology to appear in the title of this work. I could, indeed, have used the expression cerebral physiology. But cerebral physiology implies more than I expect to include.

The brain is engaged in all sorts of operations which I do not pretend to consider, for I shall limit myself to the part it plays in producing those impressions which result in the idea of the exterior world and of myself.

It is for this reason that I have determined to choose the expression, "psychic physiology," or, more briefly, psychophysiology. Psychic, that is to say relating to feelings and ideas; physiology, that is to say the formation and combination of these feelings and ideas in relation to the construction and function of the brain. This is not because I wish to be so pretentious as to introduce a new expression into science; all that I wish to do here is, on one hand, to outline my subject clearly, and on the other to impress on my readers that the description of psychic phenomena with their connections and relations, belongs to pure psychology and the study of a function and its effects. The more progress psychology has made in breaking away from the theory of innate ideas, especially the psychology that springs from the school of Locke, the more closely it has approached to physiology. And the more physiology has examined the extent of its province the less it has been frightened by the anathemas of psychology, which forbade it to indulge in lofty speculations. And today there is no longer any doubt that intellectual and moral phenomena are phenomena of the nervous tissue, that humanity is only a link, though without a doubt the most considerable link, in a chain that stretches, without any clearly defined breaks, down to the least of the animals; and that, under whatever name we may act, so long as we employ the methods of description, observation, and experience, we are physiologists. I can no longer conceive of a physiology in which all that is best in the theory of feelings and in ideas should not occupy a great place.[1]

Such is the basis of the materialistic philosophy of the soul.

I invite the reader to consider scrupulously this manner of reasoning. We may not admit the existence of the soul, "because we know of no quality without matter, because we have never met with gravitation in the body without weight, heat without a warm body, electricity without an electrical body, affinity without substances in combination, life, feeling, thought without a living being, feeling and thinking."

[1] Littre, La Science au point de vue philosophique (Paris, 1873), p. 306; La Philosophie positive, March 23, 1860

But this sort of reasoning, starting with the use of the word quality, simply begs the question.

To compare thought to gravitation, to heat, to the mechanical, physical, and chemical reactions of material bodies is to compare two very different things, precisely those things that we are debating, - mind and matter.

The will of a human being, even of a child, is personal and conscious, while gravity, heat, light, and electricity are impersonal and unconscious, the results of certain material conditions, inevitable, blind, and essentially material in themselves. The difference between the two subjects I have mentioned is great; it is all the difference between night and day.

Scientific reasoning itself sometimes errs fundamentally. Heat, for example, does not always come from a warm body; motion, which has no temperature, can produce heat. Heat is a form of motion. Light also is a form of motion. The nature of electricity remains unknown.

I confess that I cannot understand how a man of merit of Littre, the head of the Positivist school, could have been satisfied with such reasoning and not have perceived that this was merely begging the question, almost a play on words; for this argument plays with the word “quality.” What we ought first to prove positively is that thought is a property of the nervous substance, that the unconscious can create the conscious, which is contradictory in principle.

We should hardly dare to compare a piece of wood to a piece of marble or a fragment of metal, and yet we carefully compare the mind and thought, the sentiment of liberty, justice, goodness, the will, to a function of the organic substance. Taine assures us that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. Does it not seem, with such intellects as his, as if the trend of the argument had been determined in advance, and no less blindly than with the theologians? Is not that a case of preconceived ideas, of systematic convictions?

It is important, from the very beginning of this discussion, for us not to be easily satisfied with words. What is matter? According to general opinion, it is what is perceived by our senses, what can be seen, touched, weighed. Very well! The following pages are to prove that there is in man

something besides what can be seen, touched, and weighed; that there exists in the human being an element independent of the material senses, a personal mental principle, which thinks, wills, acts, which manifests itself at a distance, which sees without eyes, hears without ears, discovers the future before it exists, and reveals unknown facts. To suppose that this psychic element - invisible, intangible, and imponderable - is an essential faculty of the brain, is to make a declaration without proof; and it is a self-contradictory form of reasoning, as if one said that salt could produce sugar or that fish could become inhabitants of terra firma. What we wish to show here is that actual observation itself, the observation of the facts of experience, prove that the human being is not only a material body endowed with various essential faculties, but also a psychic body endowed with different faculties from those of the animal organism. And by “actual observation” we mean that we shall use no other method than that of Littre, Taine, Le Dantec, and other professors of materialism, and that we shall repudiate the grotesque doctrines of oral arguments, mere wanderings from the subject.

How was it possible that eminent thinkers such as Comte, Littre, Berthelot were able to imagine that reality is bounded by the circle of our sense impressions, which are so limited and so imperfect? A fish might well believe that nothing exists outside of water; a dog which has made a classification of canine sense impressions would classify them according to odor and not according to sight, as a man would do; a carrier-pigeon would be especially aware of the sense of direction, an ant of the sense of touch in his antennae, etc.

The spirit overrules the body; the atoms do not govern, they are governed. The same reasoning can be applied to the entire universe, to the worlds that gravitate in space, to vegetables and animals. The leaf of the tree is formed, an egg that hatches is formed. This formation, itself, is of the intellect in its nature.

The universal spirit is in everything, it fills the world, and that without the intervention of a brain. It is impossible to analyze the mechanism of the eye and of vision, of the ear and of hearing, without concluding that the organs of sight and hearing have been intellectually constructed. This same conclusion can be drawn, with even more supporting evidence,

from the analysis of the fecundation of a plant, an animal, or a human being. The progressive evolution of the fertilized human egg, the role of the placenta, the life of the embryo and the fetus, the creation of the little creature in the womb of the mother, the organic transformation of the woman, the formation of the milk, the birth of the child, its nourishment, the physical and psychical development of the child, are so many irrefutable manifestations of an intelligent, directing force that organizes everything and directs the tiniest molecules with as perfect an order as it does the planets and stars in the immensity of the heavens. And this spirit does not come from a brain. It has been truly said that if God has created man in his own image, man has returned the compliment. If the cockchafers imagined a creator they would make him a great cockchafer. The anthropomorphic God of the Hebrews, the Christians, the Muslims, and the Buddhists has never existed. God the Father, Jehovah, and Jupiter are only symbolic words.

If generation has been admirably arranged from the point of view of physiology, it has been far from perfect from the point of view of maternity. Why so much suffering? Why the frightful final pains? The church sees in them a punishment of Eve's sin. What nonsense! Did Adam and Eve ever exist? Do not the female animals suffer? Nature takes no heed of the woman's periods of suffering or of the brutality of the actual birth; it is undoubtedly lacking in sensibility: the "good God" is not tender towards his creature. He is not even humane, and the Sisters of Charity are kinder than he. What a problem! We do not understand God: all the evidence shows this. What does it prove? Our own spiritual inferiority.

It is undeniable that spirit, intelligence, and mental order exists in everything. Experimental science stops short when it teaches that all the phenomena of the universe reduce themselves, in the last instance, to the dualism of matter and movement, or even to the monism of matter and its properties. In natural history, botany, animal physiology, anthropology, an element may be observed that is distinct from matter and movement: that is Life. Has not the physiologist Claude Bernard shown us that life is not a product of material molecules? Moreover, the universe reveals itself to us as a dynamism, for movement is inherent in

the atoms themselves, and this dynamism is not confined to the material order, since it organizes everything, things and persons.[2]

We may say with the psychologist Bergson that the doctrine that makes thought a function of the brain, or which sees a parallel, an equivalent, between the labor of the brain and that of thought, is entirely insufficient. They tell us that the memories are there, accumulated in the brain under the form of a modification that has been impressed on such or such a group of anatomical elements: if they vanish from our memory it is because the anatomical elements in which they lie have been impaired or destroyed. The impressions made by external objects would exist in the brain as on a sensitized plate or a photographic film. These comparisons are really most superficial; for example, if the visual image of an object were an impression left by this object upon the brain, there would not be the memory of an object, there would be thousands, there would be millions of them; for the most simple and stable object changes its form, its dimensions, its shade of coloring according to the spot from which it is perceived; unless I condemn myself to absolute stability while watching it, unless my eye remains absolutely immovable in its orbit, innumerable images, which cannot be imposed upon one another, will be traced, one after another, on my retina and transmitted to my brain. What would happen if it were a question of the visual image of a person whose physiognomy changes and whose body moves, whose clothing and surroundings are different every time you see him? And yet it cannot be denied that our consciousness holds in reserve a unique image—or one almost unique—an invariable image of the object or the person, which is evident proof that something quite different has taken place here from a mere mechanical registration. The same things can be said about auditory memories. The same word spoken by different persons, or by

[2] Some years ago I knew a modest naturalist and skillful observer, of the highest personal worth, who studied directly, with his own eyes, the life of the inspects and discovered marvels concerning it. He was called Henri Fabre, and lived at Serignan (Vaucluse). It was not until after fifty or sixty years of uninterrupted labors that he saw his reputation pass beyond his own department. Every one has read, especially since his death, the ten volumes of his Souvenirs entomologiques, and it seems to me that no reader can refuse to see there the constant manifestation of mind in nature, in each insect, even in each living molecule. Let us recall, as an example, the Sphex, a hymen-opteral insect which digs several holes in the sandy earth and lays an egg in
each after it has first deposited there a victim that has been paralyzed but not killed, to serve as fresh food for the larva after its hatching. The victim must remain living but inert as long as the feast of the larva lasts: the little larvae would not relish spoiled meat. Everything for their cherished existence is foreseen by the mother, which will never know them and understands nothing about it. The whole insect life is full of these instincts of foresight. See also in my Contes philosophiques, the chapter entitled “L’oreille,” and in Contemplations scientifiques (p. 18), “L’Intelligence des plantes.”

the same person at different moments, in different sentences, gives sound images that are by no means exactly the same. How can the memory be compared to a phonograph? This consideration alone would be enough to make us suspect the theory which attributes a weakness in the memory for words to the impairment or destruction of the memories themselves, automatically recorded by the surface of the brain.

But let us see, according to the same author, what happens in these maladies.

In those cases where the injury to the brain is serious and the memory of words has been greatly impaired, it sometimes happens that a more or less great excitement, for example some deep emotion, will suddenly bring back the memory that had seemed lost forever. Would this be possible if the memory had been lodged in the brain matter, now impaired or destroyed? Far more often things happen as if the brain served to recall the memory but not to preserve it. The sufferer from aphasia becomes incapable of finding the word he needs: he seems to go round and round it, and to lack the necessary strength to put his finger on the desired sound; and in fact, in the realm of psychology the outward sign of strength is always precision. But the memory still seems to be there, and at times, when he has replaced by paraphrases the word believed to have disappeared, the sufferer from aphasia will manage to slip into one of them the word itself.

Let us now consider what takes place in progressive aphasia, that is to say, when the difficulty in remembering words grows steadily greater. In such cases, the words generally disappear in regular order, as if the malady were well acquainted with grammar. Proper names disappear first of all, then common names, next adjectives and finally verbs, as if they were in layers, placed one above another, and the injury reached these layers successively. Yes, but this malady can spring from the most diverse causes, take the most varied forms, appear at some point in the affected region of the brain and progress in no matter what direction. The order in which the various memories disappear remains the same. Would this be possible if the malady were attacking the memories themselves?

If the memory has not been stored in the brain, then where has it been preserved? For that matter, has the question of “where” any significance

when we speak of something else than a body? Photographic plates are preserved in a box, phonographic records in racks, but why should memories, which are not visible, tangible things, have need of a container, and how could they have one? Are these memories anywhere but in the mind? But the human mind is consciousness itself, and consciousness means first of all memory.[3]

We can say here, with the eminent thinker, that all things happen as if the body were simply made use of by the spirit. In this case we have no reason to suppose that the body and the spirit are inseparably bound together.

Here is a brain that labors, there is a consciousness that feels, thinks, and desires. If the labor of the brain corresponded to the totality of consciousness, if there were some equivalence between the cerebral and the mental, consciousness might share the fate of the brain and death be the end of everything: at least experience could show nothing to the contrary and the philosophy which affirms our survival would be reduced to basing its thesis on some structure of metaphysics, a basis generally fragile! But if the mental life surpasses the physical life, if the brain is limited to translating into movement a small part of what takes place in our consciousness, then life after death becomes so probable that the burden of proof rests upon him who denies rather than on him who affirms; for the only reason we can possibly have to admit the extinction of consciousness after death is that we see the body disintegrate, and this reason is no longer valid if it is a fact, established by experience, that the consciousness is at least partially independent of the body.

Bergson, metaphysician that he is, appears more “positive” than the physicist Littre. Spirit is not matter. It has never been proved that the soul is a function of the brain, a property of the cerebral substance that is destined to die with it.

We even ask how it is possible that a thinker of Tain’s breadth of mind, for example, who appreciates at its full value the conception and composition of a work, its plan and execution and who has even written a special book on the intelligence (“L’Intelligence’’), should be able to

[3] See the lectures “Foi,” and “Vie,” in Le Materialisme actuel (Paris), 1913.

attribute the creation of a philosophical work to the secretion of a combination of molecules of the materials that constitute a brain. The action of personal intelligence is so evident in a matter like this, so irrefutable, that it needs a veritable and systematic autosuggestion to eclipse it.

The brain is, without any doubt, the organ of thought, and no one would attempt to deny it. But in contradiction to what was formerly believed, the whole brain is not necessary to thought or to life.

To the examples drawn from the disorders of memory that we have just cited, we can add many others leading to the same conclusion.

My learned friend Edmond Perrier presented to the Academy of Sciences, in his lecture of December 22, 1913, an observation of Dr. Robinson's concerning a man who had lived for nearly a year with almost no suffering and with no apparent mental trouble, with a brain that was nearly reduced to a pulp, and was no longer anything but a vast purulent abscess. In July, 1914, Dr. Hallopeau brought to the Society of Surgery the account of an operation that had been performed at the Necker Hospital upon a young girl who had fallen from the Metropolitan Railway: at the trepanning it was ascertained that a large proportion of the brain matter was reduced literally to pulp. They cleaned, drained, and re-closed the wound; the patient recovered. On March 24, 1917, at the Academy of Sciences, Dr. Guepin showed, through an operation on a wounded soldier, that the partial ablation of the brain does not prevent manifestations of intelligence. Other examples could be cited. At times there remain only very slight portions: the mind makes ingenious use of what it can.

If the students of anatomy do not find the soul at the points of their scalpels, when they dissect a body, it is because it is not there. When the doctors and physiologists see nothing in our psychic faculties but the peculiar qualities of the brain, they are grossly deceiving themselves. There is something else in the human being besides the gray or white substance of the brain.

We may object that generally the faculty of thinking seems to depend on the condition of the brain and that, like the brain itself, it grows feeble with age. But is it not the instrument that grows weaker, the body and

not the spirit? Very often, among great brain-workers, the mind remains sound up to the very last day of life. All my contemporaries have known in Paris writers like Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Legouve, historians like Thiers, Mignet, Henri Martin, scholars like Barthelemy-Saint-Hilaire (1805-95), savants like Chevreul (1786-1889), who have shown up to a very advanced age the strength and youth of their souls.

Homo sapiens, thinking man: it is under this title that certain physiologists have long defined the human race. Is it possible that a chemical association of the molecules of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, etc., should be able to think?

Biology is a very recent science. Deterministic biology is a philosophy. The field of this philosophy is to consider mental and psychic phenomena as the effects of physiological reactions. But physiological explanations in the form of figurative expressions are only a confession of weakness. People look on the invention of a word as a great discovery and the hypothetical statement of a fact as an explanation.

Despite modern discoveries in the purely physico-chemical origin of muscular movements, sensation and the vital principle have remained almost as mysterious as in past ages. We cannot refuse to recognize in each one of us, side by side with, or rather above, physiological phenomena, an intellectual principle, active and autonomous, without which nothing can be explained, with which everything is easily understood.

As for this, let us say at once that the normal and well-known manifestations of the soul, of which we have just spoken, are eclipsed beside those that will be represented in the following chapters.

Medicine would find it of great advantage to take these things into consideration, and to work not only with the physical organism but also with the intellectual dynamism. A certain number of diseases that do not yield to pharmaceutical treatment, may be cured by means of the mind. As evidence that this is so, we have the cures effected by hypnotism and suggestion, and the so-called miracles of the religious faiths, from the time of the temple of Epidaurus and the cult of Aesculapius up to Lourdes and its rivals. Do not the homeopathetic globules of the

twentieth solution act a little through persuasion? Faith moves mountains.

The mind is not the body; it does not emanate from it and proclaims itself as entirely distinct from it. The will of man is recognized by every one. The good or evil perseverance in this will, the spirit of sacrifice, heroism, contempt for pain, the organic insensibility of the martyrs when they defied the most atrocious tortures, renunciation, devotion, the virtues and the vices, friendship as well as hatred, charity as well as envy—are they not all proofs of the soul's independence of the brain?

There are some human beings who do not think about anything. We meet a few of them in this world. But in general, even the most primitive man knows that there is something greater than eating, drinking, and love-making, that this ephemeral world of the senses is not an end in itself, —is indeed, only the manifestation of a superior principle, of which we can perceive nothing here but the confused shadow. This is the feeling that the religions have tried to satisfy.

If we analyze the human body and its natural functions we cannot fail to recognize that despite all the charms it can offer to our senses, it is, on the whole, when we consider only its substance, a rather vulgar object. Its true nobility lies in its spirit, its feeling, its intelligence, in its veneration for art and science; and the value of a man does not lie in his body, so short-lived, so changeable, so frail, but in his soul, which reveals itself, even in this life, as blessed with the faculty of enduring eternally.

Moreover, this body is not an inert mass, an automaton; it is a living organism. But the construction of a being, a man, an animal, or a plant, is the witness of the existence of a constructive force, of a mind in nature, of an intellectual principle that governs the atoms and is not of them. If there were only material molecules, devoid of direction, the world would not go on, some sort of chaos would have existed indefinitely, without mathematical laws, and the Cosmos would not have been ruled by order.

According to the mechanical theory of the universe, the totality of things is the inevitable effect of unconscious combinations; creation is an intellectual nothingness that becomes something and ends by thinking. Could we imagine a hypothesis more absurd in itself and more contrary to all our observations?

Mysterious nature has filled everything with spirit and she even shows herself endowed with a malignity that is generally unsuspected. What is the coquetry of the young girl that leads her to become a wife, to suffer in her beautiful body, to be happy in the pains of motherhood in order to perpetuate the human race? What is love, that delightful snare? What is mental suffering? What is feeling? Does not the silent language of nature make itself clearly heard? What is the building of a nest by two birds? The brooding mother fed by the future father? The beakful of food brought by the father and mother to the hungry nestlings? What are the hen and her chickens'? Have you ever thought about the first beat of a heart in an egg, in a child? Have you ever analyzed the fertilization of flowers? Not to see in that a reasoned order, an intention, a plan, a general aim, a finality, a mind which governs us all; not to see in life itself the supreme aim of the organization of the worlds—that is to fail to see the sun at high noon.

Where does this mysterious force lead us? We do not know. So long as life imposes its laws upon us, the planet that we inhabit carries us through space at the speed of 107,000 kilometers an hour, itself the plaything of forces that direct the world's system and of fourteen different movements. We are thinking atoms on a moving atom a million times smaller than the sun, which is itself an atom in our gigantic stellar nebula, which is only one universe, surrounded by an infinity of other universes. Unlimited immensity! Prodigious movements, stupefying speeds!

Force itself seems inherent in the atom, for we can nowhere find an immovable atom. A living being that did not contain in itself a directing force, would not live but would fall in ruins like an abandoned building.

Renan and Berthelot, those two inseparable friends, would sometimes discuss together the problem that interests us here. They both died without the hope of a future life, but with somewhat different sentiments. On August 2, 1892. Berthelot wrote to Renan, who was sinking from day to day (and died a month later): "Let us console ourselves in watching the growth of our grandchildren. It is the only sort of survival of which we can have any certain, scientific knowledge." This manner of speaking does not imply, in its spirit, an absolute negation,

and undoubtedly it responded to certain thoughts of the author of "La Vie de Jesus."

On the preceding July 20th, Renan had written to Berthelot:[4]

The most important act of our life is our death. Generally we perform this act under detestable circumstances. Our school of thought, the very essence of which is to have no need to blind ourselves with illusions, has, I believe, quite special advantages for this solemn hour.

At this moment I am at work correcting the proofs of my fourth and fifth volumes of "Israel" and I should greatly like to see it all again. If some one else should give the proofs to the printer I should be somewhat impatient in the depths of Purgatory, yet no one hut the Eternal and myself will ever be aware of the greater part of the corrections I intended to make. God's will be done! In utrumqueparatus.

The philosopher, the ancient theologian, is prepared. His belief in God persists. One can be an anti-clerical and a deist, like Voltaire. Renan was perhaps not far from admitting an indeterminable survival of the soul.

According to his son-in-law, Monsieur Psichari, who was at his deathbed, Renan declared that nothing of him would remain, nothing, nothing, nothing! This was the impression of his last hour. A hundred other great minds have had the same skepticism concerning the survival of the soul. Nevertheless, they continued to think about it. This opinion is founded only on our ignorance. Ptolemy considered nothing more stupid than the hypothesis of the movement of the earth: πανυ γελοιοτατον, superlatively ridiculous. What is thought? What is the soul? The supernatural does not exist, and the soul, if it exists in individuals, is as natural as the body.

We have finally reached the point of admitting the unity of force and the unity of substance.[5]

[4] Correspndance de Renan et Berthelot (Paris, 1898), published by Berthelot

[5] This is the title that I gave in 1865 to the scientific account that was published in the Annuaire du Cosmos for 1866. At that time we were singularly blind; but the progress of science has merely confirmed this idea of the ancient alchemists. The structure of the atom, composed of electrons, shows us even today that matter is being lost in the odern idea of energy. The atoms are the center of forces.

Everything is dynamism. Cosmic dynamism rules the worlds. Newton gave it the name of attraction. But this interpretation is insufficient. If there were nothing but attraction in the universe, the stars would form only one mass, for it would have brought them together long ago, in the beginning of time; there is something else, there is movement. Vital dynamism governs all beings: in man as he has evolved, psychic dynamism is constantly associated with vital dynamism. At bottom all these dynamisms are one: it is the spirit in nature, deaf and blind as far as we are concerned in the immaterial world, and even in the instinct of animals, unconscious in the majority of human works, conscious in a small number.

In “Uranie” (1888), I wrote:

What we call matter vanishes just as scientific analysis believes it is about to grasp it. We find force is the dynamic element, the mainstay of the universe, and the essential principle behind all forms. The human being has the soul as its essential principle. The universe is an intelligent principle that we can not understand.

In “Les Forces naturelles inconnues” (1906), I wrote:

Psychic manifestations confirm what we have learned elsewhere, that the purely mechanical explanation of the universe is insufficient and that there is something else in the universe than this pretended matter. It is not matter that governs the world: it is a psychic and dynamic element.

Since the time when these lines were written, the progress of psychic observations has superabundantly confirmed them.

A mental power rules silently and all-powerfully over the instincts of insects, assuring their existence and their perpetuation, as it rules over the birth of a bird and the evolution of the superior animals, including man himself. It is this sort of dynamism that leads the caterpillar to become a formless pulp in the chrysalis, and afterward a butterfly. It is this that from the ‘organism of certain media brings forth a substance which changes into organs that are real, though they live for but a short space, —a dynamism instantaneously creating transitory materializations.

Let us assert it: the universe is dynamic. An invisible thinking force governs worlds and atoms. Matter obeys.

The analysis of things reveals, everywhere, the action of an invisible spirit. This universal spirit is in everything, governing each atom, each molecule, though they themselves are impalpable, imponderable, infinitely small, invisible, and constitute by their dynamic aggregation visible things and living creatures; and this spirit is indestructible and eternal.

Materialism is an erroneous doctrine, incomplete and insufficient, which explains nothing to our entire satisfaction.[6] To admit only matter endowed with certain essential qualities, is an hypothesis that does not bear analysis. The Positivists are mistaken, there exist ‘‘positive’’ proofs that the hypothesis of matter dominating and governing everything through its essential qualities is beside the truth. They have not divined the dynamic intelligence which animates living creatures and even things.

We are able to say, with Dr. Geley, that the classical agents are powerless to solve the general difficulty of philosophy in regard to evolution, which has at least brought the most out of the least.[7]

Materialism that, whether consciously or unconsciously, has become so wide-spread among all the classes of society, is only a theory of the appearance of things, is only the outer surface of things that have not been analyzed. ‘‘Quod terra immobilis, in medio coeli, si ego contra assererem terram moveri . . .” wrote Copernicus, on the first page of his immortal work, in its dedication to the pope. And it proves that what has been considered fully demonstrated was absolutely false. We should do as much today for psychic physiology.

For it is through the experimental method itself that we are going to prove the weakness of materialism. We shall bring forward as evidence the entire error of classic materialism. The whole of the standard psychic physiology is erroneous, contrary to reality. There is in the human being something more than chemical molecules endowed with certain

[6] The greatest pf physiologists, Claude Bernard, who passed his life in carefully investigating the functions of the brain, concludes that “the mechanism of thought is unknown to us.” (Le Science experimental, p. 371.)
[7] De l’Inconscient au Concient, p. 33

qualities: there is an element that is not material, a spiritual principle. The impartial explanation of facts will show it to us and we shall see it act, independently of the physical senses.

Chapter 3. What Is Man? Does The Soul Exist?

We ought to seek for truth in entire liberty of mind, freed from all preconceived ideas.

Descartes.

We have just shown that the theories of materialism are entirely unproved. They are not founded on as solid a basis as has been imagined; they have many deficiencies; they leave a large number of things unexplained. They cannot be compared, as is pretended, to geometrical theorems or to mathematical certainties. Therefore the question is open to our free examination.

Before seeking to learn if our soul survives the dissolution of our body, it is indispensable to know if our souls truly exist. To discuss the continuance of a thing that did not exist would be to waste our time rather ingenuously. If thought were a product of the brain it would perish with it.

This knowledge can be acquired only by scientific, positive observation, by the experimental method. But until our day psychology has been rather a matter of words, of meditations on theories, of hypotheses. That is a tradition that we shall take good care not to follow here. We shall try to determine the nature of the soul and to learn its faculties by practical observations.

It is regrettable to have to admit that until the present day these faculties have been almost unknown. The new psychology ought to be founded on science. Let us remember the origin of the word metaphysic, “after the physical,” in the classification of its founder, Aristotle.

It has been forgotten too often.

In order to go on living after the destruction of the body, we should have to exist spiritually. Has our soul an individual existence? Have we a soul? Or, to speak more exactly, is man a soul? This is the first question to be answered; this is the first point to be established.

We have seen above that the materialists, the positivists, the atheists, the deniers of spirit in nature are utterly wrong in thinking and teaching that there is nothing in the universe but matter and its properties, and that all the facts of humanity can be explained by this theory, which is at once learned and popular. Here is an incorrect hypothesis. But we must prove the contrary thesis.

What is the soul? Where, by the way, does this word come from? What does it mean?

Up to the present the belief in the soul has been based on metaphysical dissertations and on revelations that claimed to be divine, but were unproved. Religion, faith, sentiment, desire, fear are not proofs.

How did the idea of the soul occur to the minds of men? The word “soul” and its equivalents in our modern languages (“spirit,” for example) or in the ancient languages, such words as anima, animus (a Latin transcription of ανεμοζ, spiritus, ψυχη, πνευμα atma, soul (a Sanskrit word resembling the Greek ατμοζ, vapor), etc., all imply the idea of breath; and there is no doubt that the idea of the soul and the spirit were the primitive expression of this idea of breath, among the psychologists of the earliest epoch. Psyche, even, comes from ψυχειν, ‘‘to breathe.”

These early observers who identified the essence of life and thought with the phenomenon of respiration, had to reconcile the patent, undeniable fact of the decomposition of the dead body, of the body deprived of breath, deprived of the soul, with their belief in the apparitions of the dead, that is to say, in the persistent life of those whose bodies lay there inanimate or, what was more, were dissolved and reduced to ashes. They therefore imagined that the breath, the soul was something that abandoned the body at the moment of death to go and live elsewhere its own life.

Even today, “the last breath” designates death. If some admitted the persistence of life under an invisible form, others saw in this admission only the expression of the sentiment, the regret, the affection of the survivors, and from the very beginning of the various human groups, we see two distinct and even opposed theories dividing the beliefs of men — spiritualism on one hand, materialism on the other. But the one group as well as the other reasoned superficially.

The meaning of the words “soul” and “spirit” ought to be discussed, examined. There are fundamental distinctions to be established. The properties of the living organism and psychic elements differ essentially.

In general, men think, with complete conviction, that there is only one incontestable reality in the world, the reality of objects, of matter, —that is to say, of what we see and touch and of what comes within the range of the senses. For them everything else is only an abstraction, a chimera, nothing.

The majority of laymen and scholars adhere to this way of thinking. But it is possible for the laymen and the scholars to be mistaken, and that is what has occurred in this case.

I agree with my regretted friend Durand de Gros that physics, physics itself, teaches us that appearances, even when they have all the force of the. most irresistible evidence, ought to be held in suspicion and severely examined. What is more evident than the passage of the sun and the entire heavens above our heads? Have not the eyes of all men in all times proclaimed this as evidence? Could there be any more imposing? And yet, it is only an illusion; astronomy has proved it to be so.

How superficial our doctrines appear in their criticism of knowledge, when, reasoning only from apparent observations, they point out to us what appear to be facts of experience, “The sun is a luminous disk which revolves above our heads from the east to the west, from its rising to its setting”: there was a truth of observation, it would seem—if there were such a thing! — and one that the unanimous testimony of men had proclaimed for thousands of years. How does it happen, then, that science dares to affirm that this “truth established by observation’ is undeniably an error? How does it happen that all the world knows today that it is an error?

To be best understood, —that fact which can be accurately and truthfully affirmed, that which is the result of real observation, is not that one which is expressed by saying:

“The sun is a disk,’’ etc.; it is the fact which should be expressed thus: “I have the impression of a brilliant disk which I have named the sun, and which is of such a nature that it appears to me to move from east to west.”

Those are the words in which the experimenter ought to set forth the statement of his experience, if he wishes to remain within the strict limits of the known facts of his experience; that is to say, if he wishes to express absolute certainty.

And even this disk is a false appearance, as the sun is a globe.

Let us give sensations and perceptions their due and not confound them with reality. The latter has to be proved. I see a flash of lightning, the sound of a cannon shot reaches my ears. To be quite exact, I ought to think: “I have the sensation of having heard a cannon shot, I have the sensation of having seen a flash of lightning.” But the physiologists often ignore this essential distinction. The things they offer us as facts of observation are often, if strictly examined, only conjectured facts, not observations at all; they are inductions drawn from observations, where they have failed to take into account this operation of their minds. I have the sensation of a luminous disk, of such or such an apparent diameter, moving across the sky, from sunrise to sunset; that is absolutely true. That is what I have every right to affirm, at least according to the principles laid down by the doctrine of experiment in regard to certainty. But if I say, “A disk moves across the sky,” etc., I am stating more than I know and I risk making a mistake; and the proof is that It have, in fact, made a sort of mistake.

It would be superfluous to multiply examples in support of this thesis. We experience such or such a sensation, we have such or such an idea, such or such an emotion; that is the only knowledge which is immediate and certain, that is the only truth that is actually experimental, and worthy of absolute belief.

The idea of an object implies, therefore, a sensation, a perception, a conception. But what are these things? Are they so many attributes of the object itself? No. This sensation, this conception, proves that, face to face with the object felt, perceived, apprehended, there is something that feels, perceives, apprehends.

Speaking exactly, the fact of feeling, perceiving, apprehending constitutes in itself an absolutely fundamental fact, the only one that our immediate observation imposes upon us.

We have made use of this form of reasoning since the discussions of Berkeley (1710), and even since those of Malebranche (1674). It is not a matter of yesterday.[1] We judge the universe, objects, living beings, forces, space, and time only through our sensations, and all that we are able to think about reality exists in our mind, in our brain. But it is a strange form of reasoning to conclude from this that our ideas constitute reality itself. These impressions have a cause, and this cause is external to our eyes, and to our senses. We are mirrors that reflect the images cast upon them.

The pure idealism of Berkeley, of Malebranche, of Kant, of Poincare, goes too far in its skepticism; but let us never lose sight of the principle.

It is true that it is urgently necessary to protest against superficial appearances, and to proclaim that the external world is not what it seems to us. If we were not endowed with our eyes and ears it would seem utterly different to us. The retina might be constructed differently, the optic nerve might be able to register not merely those vibrations of between 380 and 760 trillions a second, that range from the extreme red to the extreme violet, but even those beyond the infrared and the ultra-violet, or to be replaced by nerves that were sensitive to the electrical vibrations or to the magnetic waves or to the invisible forces that are unknown to us. To those beings that may exist on other planets, the universe would be something quite different from the universe of our scientific systems. We should therefore be in error if we mistook our sensations for realities. Real nature is quite otherwise. We do not know it, but the mind ought to study it.

I feel, I think; this is the only thing of which we are certain, with a present certainty—a real test, and the only one worthy to be so qualified. From this primary fact, the only one of real observation, of undeniable certainty, there springs, by means of induction, a great secondary fact, — the cause from which emanates this sensation and this thought.

And this cause resolves itself into two elements: the subject and the object; that is to say, that which feels and thinks, and that which is thought and felt.

[1] The general discussion of this may be found in my work Philosophie astronomique [just being published], in the chapter “The External World and Human Perception.”

Certain philosophers of the idealistic school, such as Berkeley in the eighteenth century, and H. Poincare in the twentieth, have gone so far as to pretend that only the thinking subject exists, that only our sensations are proved for us, and that the object, the exterior world, may very well not exist at all.

That is an exaggeration, exactly contrary to that of the radical materialists, and no less erroneous.

What is true and irrefutable is that we know what we think, and that we are ignorant of the ultimate reality, the essence of things, and of the external world of which we are able to perceive only the appearance.

Suppose we know that reality is anti-scientific. We know that our senses reveal only a part of it and even so after the manner of prisms, which modify reality. If our planet were constantly covered with clouds we should know nothing of the sun, nor the moon, nor the planets, nor the stars, and the world system would remain unknown, with the result that human knowledge would be condemned to an irremediable falsity. But what we know is nothing to what we do not know. And even our optic nerve is only a partial interpreter.

Illusion forms the unstable basis of our ideas, of our sensations, of our sentiments, of our beliefs. The first and most fundamental of these illusions is the immobility of the earth. Man feels himself to be fixed in the center of the universe and has imagined all sorts of things in consequence. Despite the demonstrations of astronomy, we have sought in vain to see, to touch truth; we have not been able to do so. We are, let us suppose, at the close of a beautiful day in summer, the air is calm, the sky clear, and everything about us is utterly peaceful. And yet we are, in fact, on an automobile racing through the depths of the heavens with dizzy speed.

Humanity lives in a state of profound ignorance and does not know that nature’s organization does not help us to learn anything of reality. Our senses deceive us in everything. Scientific analysis alone brings some light to our minds.

Thus, for example, we feel nothing of the formidable movements of the planet on which our feet rest. It appears stable, immovable, with fixed positions: a top, a bottom, left side, right side, etc. But it rushes through

space, bearing us with it, at a speed of 107,000 kilometers an hour, in its annual course around the sun, which itself moves through space in such a fashion that the earth's course is not a sharp curve but an ever open spiral, and that our wandering earth has not passed twice over the same path since it existed.

At the same time, the globe turns on its axis every twenty-four hours, so that what we call the top at a certain hour, is the bottom twelve hours later. This diurnal movement makes us travel 350 meters a second, in the latitude of Paris, and 465 meters at the equator.

Our planet is the plaything of fourteen different movements, not one of which do we feel, — not even those which touch us the most closely; for example, that of the tides on the earth's surface, which twice a day lift the ground beneath our feet as much as 30 centimeters. There is no fixed landmark that can enable us to observe them directly; if there were no shores the ocean tides would not be visible.

Do we even feel the weight of the air that we breathe? The surface of a man's body supports 16,000 kilograms of the air's weight, which is exactly counterbalanced by the pressure from within. Before Galileo, Pascal, and Torricelli, no one suspected that air had weight. Science has proved it; nature did not make us feel it.

The air is crossed by various currents of which we are unaware. Electricity has a continual part in it, the manifestations of which we scarcely ever perceive, except during storms, when there are violent ruptures of equilibrium. The sun sends us constantly magnetic radiations which, at a distance of 150 millions of kilometers, act on the magnetic needle without our senses being able to reveal this action. A few sensitive delicate organisms resemble these electric and magnetic currents.

Our eye perceives what we call light only through the vibrations of ether that are comprised of from 380 trillions (extreme red) to 760 trillions (extreme violet) a second; but the slow vibrations of the infra-red, below 380, exist and bear their part in nature, in the same way as do the rapid vibrations, above 760, of the ultra-violet, which are invisible to our retina.

Our ear perceives what we call sound only from 32 vibrations a second up to 36,000 for the shrillest whistles.

Our sense of smell perceives what we call odors only in very great proximity, and from a certain number of emanations only. The sense of smell in animals differs from that in human beings.

As a matter of fact, in nature, outside of our senses, there is no light, nor sound, nor odor; it is we who have created these words in response to our impressions. Light is a form of motion, like heat, and there is as much "light" in space at night as there is at noon, that is to say, as many vibrations of ether crossing the immensity of the heavens. Sound is another form of motion, and it is a noise only to our auditory nerves. Odors come from particles suspended in the air, which especially affect our olfactory nerves.

These are the only three senses that, in our terrestrial order, put us in touch with the world external to our bodies. The other two, taste and touch, act only through contact, which serves us little; they do not in all cases bring us the knowledge of reality.

There are about us vibrations of ether or of air, forces, invisible things that we do not perceive. That is a statement of our order that is absolutely scientific and incontestably rational.

It is possible that there may exist about us not only invisible things but even invisible, intangible beings, with whom our senses do not put us in touch. I do not say that such do exist, but I say that they may exist, and this statement is the absolutely scientific and rational corollary of the statements that precede it.

As it is granted—and proved—that our organs of perception do not reveal things to us as they are, and often give us false or erroneous impressions concerning movements of the earth, the weight of the air, radiations, electricity, magnetism, etc., we are not justified in thinking that what we see represents the only reality; we are even invited to admit the contrary.

Invisible beings may exist about us. Who would have imagined the microbes before they were discovered? But they swarm by millions and play a considerable part in the life of all organisms.

Appearances do not reveal reality to us. There is only one reality directly appreciated by us, —that is our thought. And what is most undeniably real in man is the spirit. My former works have already led to this conclusion. The present book is destined to prove it even more convincingly. Will my readers pardon me for having repeated here what I published in “Lumen” in 1867, and in “Les Forces naturelles inconnues,” 1907? It is absolutely necessary to recall these ideas.

Henri Poincard, of whom we were just speaking, “idealist,” not ‘‘spiritualist’’ as he was, despite the skepticism of his conversation, wrote the following page, apropos of the last years of a French scholar, Potier, a professor at the Ecole Polytechnique:

The illness that killed him was long and cruel. For twelve years he was stretched on his bed or on a sofa, deprived of the use of his limbs and often tortured with pain. The encroachment of the disease was slow and prolonged, the crises were more frequent every year. At the end, there was almost nothing left of his body, and in the bed, from which he could no longer rise, one saw only two eyes. His soul was stronger than the blind power of a brutal illness; it did not yield. He had himself carried to the Polytechnic School and the School of Mines. More and more, in the moments that were left him of respite from suffering, he continued to interest himself in all that he had once loved. And in this body, which became more piteous from day to day, the intelligence remained as luminous as ever, like a fortress, the ramparts of which crumble bit by bit under the enemy shells and which is still rendered redoubtable by the energy of its commander. Several weeks before his death, he asked me for some hooks on mathematics, in order to take up a study that was new to him. To his last day, he showed us that thought is stronger than death.[2]

No, it was not a spiritualist who wrote these lines, it was a professor of skepticism. So true is it that truth triumphs through itself and burns, inextinguishable, like Sirius in the midst of the starry night.

[2] Savants et ecrivains, p. 199.

As a matter of fact, Henry Poincare has often assured me personally in our many and lengthy conversations, that as he doubted even the reality of the external world, he believed only in spirit. That was excessive. Let us exaggerate nothing.

After all, we are well aware of what we feel in ourselves. While I am writing this book, while I conceive the plan, while I lay out the chapters, I feel exactly, strictly, without any parti pris, without any dogma, simply, directly, that it is I who do this work, my mind and not my body. I have a body. It is not my body that has me. This consciousness of ourselves is our immediate impression, and it is on the basis of our impressions that we can and must reason: they are the very foundation of all our reasoning.

How is it possible to pretend that the definition of the human being can be given in these words: “A tissue of flesh about a skeleton”; or in these: “A combination of molecules of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon”; or in these: “A man consists of six kilos of bones, fifteen of albumen and fibrine, and fifty of water”; or “He is a bundle of nerves”?

Let us prefer the definition of Bonald: “Man is an intelligence served by organs.”

Let us declare that man is essentially spirit, whether he knows it or not. Does not each one of us carry in himself the sense of justice? Does not a child who has been justly punished for a fault know that he deserved it? And when he has been unjustly punished does he not revolt against the injustice? From what comes the moral conscience? Man has had for ancestors the animals of the tertiary, secondary, and primary geological periods, which had gradually evolved from reptiles into simians. It is not their brains that have created moral conscience, especially this sense of justice that is innate in children. We can pretend that it comes first from ancestors, then from education. But whence comes this education? This belongs to the world of the spirit. There is no common measure between this intellectual, spiritual, moral world and the physico-chemical operations of the brain substance.

The will is certainly a form of energy belonging to the order of the intelligence. Let us take one example out of a thousand. Napoleon wishes to conquer the world and sacrifices everything to this ambition. Examine

all his acts, even the least important, from the campaign in Egypt up to Waterloo. Not physiology, nor chemistry, nor physics, nor the theory of mechanism, will explain this personality, this continuity of ideas, this perseverance, this obstinacy. Cerebral vibrations? That is not enough. In the brain there is another thinking being of which the brain is only the instrument. It is not the eye that sees, it is not the brain that thinks.

The study of a star through the telescope cannot be legitimately attributed to the instrument, nor to the eye, nor to the brain, but only to the spirit of the astronomer that seeks and finds. The human will, in itself alone, would suffice to prove the existence of the psychic world, of the thinking world that differs from the material, visible, tangible world.

The action of the will is revealed in everything. We can take very simple examples of this.

I am sitting in an armchair, my hands on my knees.

With my right hand I amuse myself in lifting, one by one, the fingers of my left hand; they fall back naturally.

But if I will they do not fall back; they will remain in the air.

What is it that is acting upon their muscles? It is simply my will.

Therefore, there is a mental force that acts upon matter. This force is associated with my brain, —that goes without saying. But, nevertheless, it is an idea, and this idea acts upon matter. The initial cause is not the brain, the vibrations of which are only the effects.

The man who exercises his will is the author of his destiny.

Let us now consider, especially, thought in man.

It is the perpetual demonstration of the existence of the soul. When we reflect, when we say simply, “I think,” or “I will,” when we calculate a problem, when we exercise our power of abstraction and generalization, we affirm the existence of the soul.

Thought is the most precious, the most personal, and the most independent thing possessed by man. Its liberty cannot be attacked. You can torture the body, imprison it, drive it by material force; you can do nothing against thought. Nothing you do, nothing you say can compel it.

It laughs at everything, scorns everything, dominates everything. When it acts a sham part, when worldly or religious hypocrisy causes it to lie, when political or commercial ambition puts a deceptive mask upon it, it remains itself, despite and against everything, and knows what it wishes. Is this not convincing evidence of the existence of a psychic being, independent of the brain?

It is not merely matter, not merely an assemblage of molecules that is able to think. It is just as childish, just as ridiculous to assert that the brain feels and thinks as to attribute the thoughts expressed in a telegram to the galvanic batteries that create the electricity used in the telegraph.

Spirit, thought, the controlling power of the mind, is neither matter nor force. The earth which gravitates about the sun, a falling stone, running water, heat which loosens or tightens the bonds between the atoms, show us, on the one hand, matter, on the other, energy. Thought, reason, the direction of things in accordance with a certain plan, reveals an entirely different principle.

No one has forgotten the classic lines of Virgil, in the magnificent sixth book of the Aeneid:

Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus,

Mens agitat molem, et magno Se corpore miscet.[3]

The poet has expressed the truth. The universe is ruled by spirit, and when we study this spirit in man, we ascertain that it is neither physical energy nor matter. It makes use of both and it often governs them according to its will.

The proofs of the existence of the human personality are innumerable: a special volume would be necessary to state them. As a matter of fact, has not each one of us many times apprehended their significance?

[3] All that exists in the universe is transfused by the same principle, Soul animating matter, which mingles with this great body

We have these proofs before our eyes every day. Stoicism in adversity, the energy displayed in escaping poverty, the devotion to noble causes, the sacrifice of one's own life for the welfare of the country, the will to conquer, the apostle of either religion or science, the martyr for the triumph of what lie believes to be true—are not all these just so many manifestations of the existence of the soul? How is it possible that material cerebral secretions which, as people pretend, resemble those of the kidneys or of the liver, could produce intellectual personalities?

A very original demonstration of "the reality of the soul through a study of the effects of chloroform and curari on the animal economy" was presented a long time ago (in 1868) under this title, by Monsieur Ramon de la Sagra, a corresponding member of the Institute (Academy of Moral and Political Sciences), who died in 1871 on the island of Cuba.

The breathing of the vapors of ether or of chloroform destroys all general sensitiveness, so that persons who have been placed in this extraordinary physiological state can undergo the most serious operations without feeling them. And not only do those under the influence of ether or chloroform feel no pain, while sharp instruments separate, cut, and torture their tissues and nerves; not only do they remain entirely insensible to these lacerations, wounds, and cuts, which in an ordinary state would wring cries of pain and terror from them, but it often happens that agreeable, even exquisite and delirious sensations arc experienced by the soul during this astonishing sleep.

Ramon de la Sagra presents this phenomenon as a scientific demonstration of the existence of the soul. The soul and the body are certainly not the same thing, as they are so manifestly separated here; thanks to the influence of ether or chloroform, the soul continues to think as an individual, while the body is tortured by steel. These two elements of the human whole are separated here by the agent of anesthesia. This learned Spaniard had been very much struck by the action of the chloroform upon his wife, who, during her moments of unconsciousness, had kept her thought intact and had shown him that her intelligence had been in no way affected. She talked tranquilly with the surgeon, Verneuil, while he was cutting flesh and nerves with his knife. And later she told her husband that her ideas had been rather agreeable.

Let us remember, also, that in the school of Nancy pain has been suppressed by hypnotism.

The distinction between the soul and the body—nay, more, their separation—has been observed under many conditions, in certain states of hypnosis, of somnambulism, of magnetism, of double personality, etc. The physiological hypotheses that have been imagined to explain these manifestations of the psychic individuality independent of the bodily organism are entirely insufficient. Our present conceptions of life and thought are on the point of collapsing.

Everything proves to us that the human soul is a substance distinct from the body. Despite its etymology, the “soul” is not a breath; it is an intellectual entity. How many words, in fact, have changed their significance! Electricity, for example, which is derived from the word ambre, ελεκτρον.

We intend to establish this personality by proving the existence of the supra-normal faculties that have nothing in common with the properties of nature.

Chapter 4. Supra-Normal Faculties Of The Soul, Unknown Or Little Understood

When I was a child, I spake as a child . . . I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Saint Paul.

To imagine that we can attain certainty in any sort of study is to be rather naive: we are certain of nothing; our senses, our powers of observation, our intellect are not fitted to discover absolute reality. The most positive of the sciences, astronomy, attains to certainty in its measurements. Like arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, it is an exact science. We know that our planet turns about the sun in 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, and 9 seconds, at a distance of 149,500,000 kilometers, that the sun is 1,301,000 times larger than the earth, that it is 332,000 times heavier; that Mars turns about the sun at a distance of 228 millions of kilometers, in a year of 686 days, 23 hours, 30 minutes and 40 seconds, and revolves on its own axis in 24 hours, 37 minutes, 22 seconds, etc. Physics, chemistry, zoology, botany, geology, are far from being so exact; human physiology and medicine also are far from exactitude, and psychology is still farther.

All psychological instruction in schools and from standard treatises needs to be perfected and even reformed.

As the normal faculties of the soul—understanding, reason, will, which are the objects of classical instruction and which are habitual and permanent in their manifestations—have not given indisputable proof of the soul's independence of the brain or of the certainty of survival, we have approached the problem from another angle and we ought to go farther toward its solution. Man is before everything a thinking being. Thought is a fact. Along with this primordial fact, may we not inquire if certain faculties of the soul, at present unknown or little understood, do not offer us subjects for investigation, the careful analysis of which would help us to dispel an ignorance that has already lasted far too long, throw light on the problem of our psychical constitution, increase our

very limited knowledge, and finally establish an acceptable science of psychology such as we have always desired, after so many barren discourses on the same subject, and so many useless dissertations revolving in the same circle? Perhaps humanity is not intended to remain always imprisoned.

The preceding chapter has already invited us to study experimentally the question as to whether or not the soul exists independently of the body. If it exists, like an atom of iron, of oxygen, of hydrogen, or of radium, for example, — an atom which would he endowed with the faculty of thinking, a psychic atom, —it must survive organic disintegration and even pass through, in the course of the corporeal life, the material modifications of the brain as well as those of ideas. The animating principle remains; the form alone is perishable.

We have just recognized, through the preceding discussions, that the probability of the soul's personal existence has been physiologically settled. We can go even farther and prove this personal existence, by the manifestations of faculties of the soul that cannot be attributed to the material properties of the brain, or to organic, chemical, or mechanical combinations—faculties that are intrinsic.

The will, the special proof of the individuality of the spirit, will be examined in the following chapter, as well as other demonstrative faculties. But first I wish to point out certain unexplored or little understood faculties, —metaphysical faculties, to use the happy expression of Charles Richet.

For example, the mind's power of perceiving unknown things, or rather of foreseeing.

What is a presentiment? What is the nature of this faculty of the soul that is often so sure?

For this investigation, which was begun so many years ago, I have brought together, compared, and discussed hundreds of observations.

Some of my readers may remember that in the year 1899 I undertook an analytical inquiry into these faculties of the soul and their manifestations, the first results of which I published in my work, "L 'Inconnu et les problemes psychiques." Twenty years have passed since

then and. I have continued to receive, from great numbers of observers, communications which I have made it my duty to verify as much as possible, well knowing that despite the best memory and the most indisputable, honesty, one's recollections inevitably lose their shape and make all testimony more or less suspicious. We shall not exercise a too great severity in the admission of these often extraordinary facts. Another excess would be to reject them all beforehand. Truth lies between extremes, and we must not forget that "the truth may at times not appear true."

One may have remarked, in the work of which I have just spoken, examples of presentiments that had a definite cause; for example, on page 124, that of a collegian, weeping bitterly at the moment when his father was dying far from him; on page 324, that of a student of medicine who met a doctor whom he had not seen for a long time and of whom he was just thinking; on page 326, that of a lady oppressed with a great uneasiness at the hour in which her father was dying, far away; on page 332, that of a workman leaving his work to rush to his wife who had just been knocked down by a wagon; that of a man leaving his friends abruptly, at a pleasure party, to return home, where he found his child ill with croup, surrounded by four doctors, etc. These presentiments were caused by the transmission, if not of thoughts and of some sort of appeal, at least of psychic waves. We shall give them special study here.

The presentiment of which you are about to read is particularly worthy of attention. I invite my most stubborn readers to weigh it well in every way.

Monsieur Constans, Minister of the Interior, President of the Council of Ministers, while he was dining one day, with Madame Constans, at my table in my observatory of Juvisy, told us the following incident as it had happened to himself:

It was in 1889, at the time of the great struggle against General Boulanger[1] and his party over the revision of the French Constitution. One morning, in his office, a book was handed him with his mail. As he was in a hurry to leave for the Council of Ministers, he flung it on a table, asking Madame Constans to see what it was, and went out. Madame

[1] With whom I also had relations, as astronomers like to observe everything, even in politics

Constans, who was having her hair arranged by her maid, took the book on her knees and started to open it: she thought it was a prayer-book sent by a cousin. But three days before she had received, she said, “some horrible things” which had made her prudent. When with great care she had half opened the book she thought she saw ‘‘some vile things.’’ She immediately gave the whole package to her maid, saying:

“Carry that out to the entrance hail, it’s some more filth.” This confidential servant had hardly gone out when Madame Constans, half-dressed, her hair down her back, ran to the entrance and cried: “Don’t open it, don’t touch it!” Why?

She sent for Monsieur Cassel, the Director of Public Safety, and urged him to examine the object, as she had a presentiment of some mystery connected with it. When Monsieur Cassel shook the book, he saw certain little white particles fall on the table. He put a match to them, and they caught fire. He realized the danger, put the book under his arm, and left for the prefecture, for the laboratory of Monsieur Girard. At the end of an hour Monsieur Cassels came back and told Madame Constans that the book contained enough dynamite to blow up the wing of the Ministry that was occupied by the minister. Madame Constans fainted and remained ill for eight days.

Such was the tale which Monsieur and Madame Constans told us at table, before a dozen persons.

The minister’s wife had guessed the danger; more than guessed, —felt it so intensely that she had run, half-clothed, as far as the minister’s antechamber to stop the servants who were about to open it.

Does not this show a sort of inner vision of the spirit, which has no connection with normal sight? We may attempt to compare this impression to a dog’s sense of smell, but what an abyss exists between the two experiences! To have suspected a menace, that can be explained in the circumstances; but to have violently felt the immediate danger!

A few days after this was told me, my friend Girard, director of the laboratory of the prefecture of police, confirmed for me his special analysis of the charge of dynamite.

At this same dinner Madame Constans told us of another presentiment no less worthy of attention, which she had experienced.

In accordance with my practice to verify everything, by investigation, I was able to have the story confirmed by the physician who was attending her, Dr. Resseguet of Toulouse, the Constans family physician, in a letter which I give fully as I have given the preceding ones.

LETTER OF DR. RESSEGUET

Toulouse, March 16, 1901.

Dear, Great Master:

I am making it my task to answer your questions on the subject of Madame Constans's presentiment in connection with her refusal to take some medicine sent by a pharmacist. This is the story; I shall tell it to you impersonally, as a historian:

Madame Constans was twenty-three years old, and was living in Toulouse, when one day she contracted diphtheria. Dr. Resseguet, who is still at Toulouse, was called to her bedside. He ordered that her throat should be painted with muriatic acid. Madame Constans's mother gave him a bottle containing the supposed acid; but the sick woman, though very feeble, refused to let them go on, objecting that they were going to kill her, — that it was not muriatic acid. After a few unsuccessful attempts to treat her, and wishing to make sure himself as well as to prove to the patient that the medicine was all right, he thrust the stick of a match into the little bottle. It carbonized at once; it was sulphuric acid!

That is what I remember. I do not recall the exact details, but I have not forgotten that a serious mistake had been made by the druggist in connection with one of my prescriptions, and that Madame Constans, because of a strong presentiment, felt she must refuse to use the remedy.

I have endeavored to gather more materials about it; I have looked through my old notebooks of this period, but in vain. I know that it was a case of diphtheria. My prescription had called for two bottles, one of which was for cauterization, the other for a potion, and the druggist's

mistake must have been a confusion of labels. I know I have always remembered the fortunate presentiment that saved Madame Constans from the terrible effects of the ingestion of a caustic.

Allow me to tell you, Monsieur and great Master, that I am one of those whom your learned and interesting writings on the "Plurality of Worlds" has deeply interested and stirred. For a long time I have been your disciple in the matter of scientific theology, which has come to save the religious aspirations of humanity from materialism.

Be good enough to receive the homage of my profound and sincere gratitude. This homage is your due.

(Letter 980.1[2])

B. Resseguet

Here, then, are two incontestable empirical observations of presentiments, of which a materialist physiology can surely give no explanation. I could add to them a hundred similar statements that prove the existence of inner faculties, still unknown, that may be studied for our personal instruction.

There is here no act of reasoning, nor transmission of thought, nor telepathy. It is a sort of divination. The transmission of thought, telepathy, will be the object of special chapters later. We are entering upon the analysis of a whole unknown world, and we ought to distinguish with care the intrinsic nature of the phenomena.

We shall have analogous facts to study in the chapters on mental vision. Let us limit ourselves here to what are strictly presentiments of our waking hours, without troubling ourselves for the moment about what happens in dreams.

I have related somewhere how Delaunay, the director of the Observatoire at Paris, had the presentiment that the sea would prove fatal to him and had always refused to take a sea voyage, until one of his relatives,

[2] I repeat here, what I have already said on page 14, that the numbers associated with these letters are those under which they were filed during my researches on psychic phenomena, begun in 1899, and they may serve, on occasion, for reference to the originals and to verify the narratives. I will add that among the numerous letters that have been sent me telling e of these inexplicable facts are some which state that they are only revealing them to me, personally, on the express condition that I do not publish them. (For example, letter 419.)

Monsieur Millaud, came in August to beg him to take a week's rest. They went to Cherbourg and were both drowned as they were returning from visiting the "roadstead," the boat capsizing in a gust of wind. Arsene Houssaye relates a similar story in his "Confessions" (Volume IV, page 425). Let us hear him:

His sister Cecile had fled from the Prussian invasion of 1870 and had taken refuge in a town on the seacoast.

One day some one suggested a trip on the ocean, but all at once my sister exclaimed: "No, I do not wish to go on the ocean." Her friends asked her why: she told them how once at Toulon, as she was going on board a ship, an Italian fortune-teller had advised her to stay on shore; "Carissima donna, the sea will do you harm." My sister had gone on, nevertheless, giving a hundred sous to the Italian. They were hardly at sea before a gust of wind had flung her into the water, from which, however, she had been saved. The next day, the fortune-teller had appeared at the sous-prefecture. They did not wish to receive her, but my sister went out to her. The old sibyl looked into her eyes and prophesied that the sea would be fatal to her.

That was why she had not wished to take refuge in England, where she was expected by one of her friends. Instead of a trip -by sea, they decided on a walk on terra firma.

It was the tenth of October; the prefect, his wife, his young daughter, his two nieces and my sister went gaily to the point of Penmarc'h, that bristling promontory of cyclopean crags. Penmarc'h means "horse's head," for the speech of the Bretons is as full of images as that of Chateaubriand. The sea broke against it with the noise of a tempest, all about were unfathomable depths and whirlpools; also, below the horse's head there was a veritable hellhole. Out on the point of Teul-an-Ifern, then, the prefect led these five young and pretty women, so that they might see the terrifying spectacle of the raging sea. They were all laughing gaily when they came out on the rock, as into a box at the opera. While they sat down here and there, the prefect smoked a cigar near by in the doorway of a marine painter's studio. The women called to him to come and watch the wonderful sight of the sea besieging the rock. They were not in the least uneasy, for the assault of the waves stopped far below them.

The hour for departure had come, but my sister, captivated by the rugged beauty of the spectacle, asked for five minutes' grace. Suddenly a wave from the depths, one of those terrible waves like a thunderbolt leapt up, scaled the rock, and carried off the five terrified women. The prefect turned white as he stared at the whirling water. An umbrella was flung toward him; a single cry: "Mother!" He dashed forward as if to fight the waves, but already the flood had gone down, bearing its harvest. And then nothing, just nothing but the sea, already calmer, singing the De Profundis, its bouquet of women on its bosom.

The jealous ocean has kept my sister in its depths, without flinging her back upon the shore. Nothing reappeared, —her graceful body, or her hair, loosened by the waves, or her umbrella, or her fan; nothing remained of her but that cry: "Mother!"

It was a white pigeon that brought me this somber news. Alas! the pigeons of the siege of Paris never brought us good tidings.

Presentiments, warnings of this kind are too numerous to be fortuitous and it is not surprising that we should seek an explanation of them. They form part of the psychic phenomena we are to study. One chance coincidence, yes; but twenty, a hundred, a thousand? No. There is no superstition in analyzing these mysteries.

The story we are about to hear shows us an entirely well-balanced man who, while he was with friends twenty kilometers from home, and expecting to spend the night, was oppressed with a sense of indefinable misfortune. He changed his plans so as to return home immediately, where he found his mother playing cards. Later she went to bed as usual, but appeared to him at the end of the same night, announcing that she was dying, at the very moment when she actually died from the rupture of an aneurysm, in a room situated at the other end of the house. There are two distinct facts here: first, the sensation from fear of imminent and unforeseen misfortune; secondly, the apparition at the moment of death. Here is the letter:

Dear Master:

For the sake of the knowledge you are giving to the world, I must inform you of something that happened to me five years ago, and which you certainly ought not to doubt, despite your severe scientific methods. First of all, I must tell you who I am.

At present (1899) I am thirty-five years old. I enjoy excellent health. I have never suffered from hallucinations, and I have always -been skeptical regarding visions and presentiments.

I am a landowner and live on my estate. I am engaged in the cultivation of my lands, and besides, I have administrative duties in - the service of the government. I am a semsky natchalnik, which can be translated as an administrator or territorial judge, in the district of Kolm, province of Pskoff.

At half-past seven in the morning, on the twentieth of April, 1894, my mother, Madame Olga Nikoloiewna Arboussoff, breathed her last. Nothing gave warning of the approach of this death, for my mother was only fifty-eight years old and was feeling well. At the time I was living with her on my estate, where I am still living, in the village of Fnoukovo, district of Kolngdepskof.

In the year 1894, the twentieth of April (the day of my mother's death) fell during Easter week (old style) and on the nineteenth I had gone to pay an Easter visit to some friends. They live about two kilometers from my estate and I have often passed the night with them, returning home the next morning. I expected to do so on this occasion. Nevertheless, an indefinable presentiment prevented me from spending the night with them, and despite their urgent entreaties, I started back the very same evening. During the whole journey I was ill at ease and obsessed with the presentiment of approaching misfortune. I knew no relief until I arrived home and found some friends with whom my mother was playing cards. My mother used to suffer from violent attacks of headache, and when I asked her how she felt, she answered that her head pained her a little. Before going to my room, I wished her good night, as usual, and then lost no time in falling asleep.

My house is large and my chamber is somewhat removed from my mother's; two stonewalls separate them.

The next day (April 20th) I awoke entirely covered with cold -sweat, and trembling from a frightful dream that had just appeared to me. To tell the truth, it was not a dream but a vision. At the moment of my awakening, at exactly half-past seven (for I looked at once at my watch), I plainly saw my mother approach my bed. She came and kissed me on the forehead, saying: "Farewell, I am dying! I am dying!"

I was just getting up to go into my mother's room when I suddenly heard a great uproar in the house and people running about. My mother's chambermaid dashed into my room, bathed in tears and screaming: "Monsieur, Madame has just died!"

According to the statement of the servants, it appeared that my mother had risen at about seven, and had gone into her grandchildren's room. She kissed her little granddaughter, went back to her room and, as her custom was, knelt down before the icons to say her morning prayers.

At the moment when she prostrated herself before the images she suddenly died. Death had been caused by the bursting of a blood-vessel.

Well, the death had taken place at exactly half-past seven, the hour of my vision.

There, my dear Master, is the event which I believed I ought to communicate to you. If you desire to ask me some questions I shall make haste to satisfy you for the sake of your valuable and carefully verified researches. It seems to me, as a matter of fact, as if I had already written to you.

Alexis Arboussoff, (Letter 814.)

Kolm, Government of Pskoff, Russia.

There are two remarkable facts here that may be interpreted for our instruction.

Whatever may be the tale of the observer, who may vary his expressions according to his memory, and whatever may be the orthography of the foreign names, the events in themselves exist.

In the first place, the account is scientifically admissible. it is that of a well-balanced man, at the height of his powers, and it is our duty to consider it with the same care as an astronomical, meteorological, or chemical observation, or any other actual observation. There are two remarkable facts here to be examined for our instruction.

Monsieur Alexis Arbousaoff, thirty years of age, in 1894, living with his mother, fifty-eight years of age, on his estate in Russia, goes to visit his friends, twenty kilometers from his home, intending to spend the night and return the next day. But that very night a painful presentiment disturbs him to the depths of his being and prevents him from carrying out his plans: he feels himself urged to return home at once, without waiting until the next day. When he comes back into the house, he is amazed to find no explanation of this presentiment, everything is going along tranquilly, as usual, and friends are playing cards with his mother.

The interesting thing to know would be what had been the cause of this telepathic sensation. It did not seem that it could have been his mother, as she did not appear disturbed about her health despite the headache from which she was suffering. We know of cases in which sorrowful appeals have been sent out, physically or morally, and heard far away under some form or other. Here we seem to find an intuition in the mind of the son. Nevertheless, the psychic communication between the two cannot be doubted, and it is accompanied here by a singular prevision of the future. Madame Arboussoff was going to die in a few hours: she did not suspect it and her son was equally unaware of it.

But there is something else in us besides our apparent normal consciousness. Whatever name we may give it— ‘‘unconscious,” “subconscious,” “subliminal”—this other thing exists: you cannot escape that.

Well, it is our inmost self, transcendent, permanent, existing before our material body and independent of it; it is our soul, whose faculties are unknown to official science.

Let us now look at the second point.

The man who tells the story, a responsible landowner and territorial judge, goes to bed and sleeps the sleep of an honest man satisfied with his lot. But now it happens that the next morning he awakens, covered

with sweat, trembling from a horrible nightmare. What was it? His mother, dead suddenly in her room far away and separated from him by two other rooms, comes up to his bed, kisses him on the forehead, and says, “Farewell, I am dying!”

The personal action of the dying woman cannot be doubted here. Her spirit must have affected that of her son, enough to show him her image. We must not conclude from this that something material, or semi-material, an ethereal body, clad like the dead woman, had passed from the mother’s room to the son’s: such an interpretation is not necessary. But this mother did, nevertheless, really show herself to her son when she announced her death to him. That is the incontestable fact before which all denials must yield.

Is that not a proof of the existence of a spirit in the human organism, a thinking spirit, a mental will, affection, personality? The observation is as positive, as irrefutable as that of a fireball, of a thunderbolt, of any carefully verified physical phenomenon.

It was in spirit that this mother made herself felt to her son and this psychic action of her brain was expressed by her image.

The account that follows shows a certain analogy with the preceding one and in the same way brings forward a supra-normal faculty of the soul for our study.

My mother died on October 4, 1888, in her home five miles from Ozark, Missouri. She was fifty-eight years old. At the time I was living at Fordland, about twenty miles from my mother’s house. I had not seen her for two months, but she wrote to me every week. The night of her death, I was attending a religious service with my wife. We had our year-old baby with us. About ten o’clock in the evening, before the end of the service, while the congregation was singing, I felt the need of seeing my mother, a thought which was suggested to me by the sight of some people who seemed too warm and which reminded me that my mother was subject to attacks of breathlessness in which she needed air, and in their faces I seemed to see my mother suffering. All at once I was mastered by the impulsive desire to rush to her, a desire so strong that I confided the baby to a neighbor and left, without telling my wife, who was in another part of the church. I ran to take the train, but missed it,

and in my determination to reach my mother's home without delay, I followed the track on foot, for about seven miles, and by another road; I was able to reach my mother's house at three in the morning. I bad therefore walked more than four hours.

My mother had just died. I knocked, no one answered. I managed to open the door and found my sister, whom the noise had awakened. I asked her where my mother was and she answered:

"She is in bed." "Oh!" I said, "she is dead!"

I was sure of it. We went to her bed; she had indeed died, undoubtedly several hours before. She had gone to bed about ten o'clock, feeling better than usual and planning with my sister to get up early to go to Ozark.

Thomas Garrison.

An inquiry made by the English Society for Psychical Research has published the details of the verification of this tale by the sister of the narrator, his wife and the neighbors.[3]

So here is a man who, without any known cause, without any normal reasons, leaves a religious service which he is attending, gives his child to a neighbor to hold, does not tell his wife, and goes twenty miles on foot at night to rush to his mother who has just died!

It seems to me impossible to doubt that the spirit of the dying mother had affected his own. Moreover, it was the spirit of the narrator that had felt that emotion, as imperious as it was incomprehensible. Was the action conscious or unconscious on the part of the mother? We know nothing about it. But we cannot refuse to admit that between the two persons, the mother and son, there was psychic communication, mental correspondence. It is what we call supra-normal faculties belonging to the soul, independent of the physical senses.

[3] Myers, Human Personality (London, 1903), II, 112

Let us continue our free examination. Ought we to classify this event in the category of tragic presentiments? In any case it is most extraordinary.

Among hundreds, among thousands of psychic phenomena of this order, we have merely an embarrassment of choices to prove the existence in man of unknown powers and unsolved riddles. For example, here is one of recent date, of which I heard from the mouth of the very person to whom it had occurred.

A lady living in Paris (Madame Marichal, 20 rue Custine, XVIIIth arrondissement) awoke on a certain night—Thursday, the twenty-sixth of March, 19l4, —under the impression of a terrible nightmare. A sort of specter, vague and formless, was there, close to her bed, clutching her arm, and ordering her to choose between two frightful menaces. ‘‘It is necessary,’’ it made her understand, ‘‘that of the two, your husband and your daughter, one must die. Choose!”

“Choose,’’ she said, ‘‘between my husband and my daughter? It is impossible. Neither the one nor the other!’’ she replied, trembling all over.

“You must choose,’’ replied the apparition. ‘‘One of the two must die. Decide! Which is to be sacrificed?’’

The woman struggled long minutes, a prey to the most dreadful anguish, without being able to decide. Mad with grief, she refused to answer. What indescribable suffering gripped her soul! We can imagine it. Her husband was there, in perfect health, forty-six years of age, sleeping beside her. Her daughter, who came with her to tell me this singular hallucination, is, at the moment at which I write these lines (June, 1918) a beautiful girl of seventeen. We can imagine Madame Marichal’s agitation. She felt an equal affection for them both.

Finally, conquered by a will stronger than her own that insisted on an answer, she ended by saying to herself that maternal love ought to be stronger than anything else and that she would sacrifice her husband sooner than her child.

Five days later Monsieur Marichal, whom she had been careful not to tell of this nightmare, and who had never been ill in his life, felt fatigued

when he returned from his office (Marine Cable) and went to bed. The doctor, who was called on Wednesday, could not discover symptoms of any malady, and diagnosed the case as a slight attack of grippe. On Thursday his condition grew worse. On Saturday the condemned man was dead. The heart had stopped, the doctor declared. No indication of any heart trouble had ever been discovered.

I have questioned Madame Marichal and her daughter, both separately and together, in order to compare their accounts of this strange tale, and for me its authenticity is unquestioned.

We can add this premonitory dream to the seventy-six similar dreams published in “L‘Inconnu.” But what a sinister affair! and how explain it?

The most simple thing is to suppose that Monsieur Marichal was to die at this date, without himself suspecting his state of health. When we die it is, in certain circumstances, only the end of a cycle of illness of which we are unaware. We think our health is good, but gradually an unknown sickness is weakening us. The very sensitive sub-consciousness of the wife may have unconsciously perceived this state of health and its fatal end. Our psychic personality is endowed with powers that have as yet been analyzed very little.

This is an explanatory hypothesis, but it is only a hypothesis.

If we accept it we must, to complete it, imagine why it took the form of an apparition with an annunciation.

Another hypothesis:

Does not the invisible world, in the midst of which we live, contain beings as invisible as the forces that govern nature, such as attraction, electricity, magnetism of the sun and the planets, etc., —beings, spirits, thoughts which may possess a rudimentary consciousness as well as the power of seeing what is taking place in a living organism and of making themselves manifest? That is a bold hypothesis, but it will help us to understand the case that has just been reported. An invisible being that had become visible could, so to speak, impose on Madame Marichal the trick of the forced card. We have all seen those sleight-of-hand men who offer us a handful of cards, inviting us to choose “freely.” But we always choose the card the man wishes (except when another is substituted).

The spirit we are imagining might have known, seen that the condemned man had to die shortly and have led the wife to choose him herself.

Even while I am imagining this hypothesis, I admit that it seems to me very unlikely; but we cannot declare that it is inadmissible. It recalls, under another aspect, the guardian angel that the Christian religion teaches us is the invisible companion of each one of the faithful. Whether it is applicable or not, the fact to be explained is there before us, unassailable.

May we not also admit, from the evidence of events, —a series rich in concurring observations, —that the atmosphere, or, to speak more exactly, the ether contains a psychic element that has not yet been discovered? The chemical composition of the air, oxygen, and nitrogen, was discovered only in the eighteenth century. It was believed then that its composition was entirely understood; about twenty years ago, however, more subtle, unknown elements were discovered, neon, trypton, argon, and tenon. Others may exist, even more tenuous and of a finer essence. Every second a human soul abandons a body. Is it annihilated? Nothing proves that it is. These souls number about 86,000 to 100,000 a day, more or less, one million in ten days, ten millions in a hundred days, thirty-six millions a year. To believe, with Victor Hugo, that ‘‘everything is full of souls” is perhaps not poetic fiction. But may not this psychic element be concerned in the explanation of the phenomena we are studying?

Nevertheless, in the example with which we are dealing here, the first hypothesis seems to me the most probable, especially if we reflect that our mental being is able to externalize itself, to go out from us and assume a form that is foreign to our consciousness and even to talk with us, as happens in dreams. But in this instance it is the case of a dream that was at first unconscious and on awakening became hallucinatory.

We see how complex the question is which we are studying. This example, which I have just presented from among a thousand, has no other aim, for the moment, than to justify the title of this chapter: ‘‘Supra-Normal Faculties of the Soul, Unknown or Little Understood.” It bears the number 4033 in the inquiry of which I have already spoken. A tale that is not without resemblance to that of Madame Marichal is related in ‘‘Ainslee’s Magazine’’ for March, 1892, by Dr. Minot Savage:

In a certain quarter of New York there lived a young man who had just finished his studies abroad at the university of Heidelberg. By nature he was anything but imaginative. Tall and robust, he had the reputation (if an athlete. His favorite studies were mathematics, the physical sciences, and electricity. He had just come back from abroad and, so far as could be known, his health was excellent. He was at the time with his mother in her house in the country .It was his custom to go every day, after dinner, into the public square for a little stroll while he smoked his pipe. One evening lie came in quietly and went to bed without speaking to any one. The next morning he went into his mother's room, before she had risen, and passed his hand over her face so as to wake her gently; then he said:

"Mother, I have something very sad to tell you. You must arm yourself with courage so as to be strong enough to bear the news."

His mother was, naturally, astounded and asked him what he meant.

"Mother, I know what I am saying; I shall die soon."

Troubled and full of anguish, as may be imagined, she asked him to explain himself.

"Last evening," he answered, "as I was walking in the square, a spirit appeared to me and began to walk beside me. I have received the warning: I must die."

Very much impressed, the mother sent for a doctor and told him of the incident. The doctor, after having carefully examined the young man, found nothing abnormal in his condition and assured them that it was only a bad dream, a pure hallucination, that they must not think of it again, and that in a few days the mother and son would laugh at their fears.

The next day, the young man was not quite so well as usual and the doctor was called a second time: again he laughed at their fears.

The third day the condition of the sick man had grown worse, and then he was obliged to admit a case of appendicitis. The young man was

operated upon and died two days later. Only five days had passed between the vision and the death.

When confronted with these tales, people have the habit of disposing of them lightly with the word “hallucination,” and they imagine they have solved the problem by suppressing it. This is childish.

I should only have to dip into the innumerable documents of this inquiry to add new and different cases to those that have been told and to show the extent of the unknown regions we have to explore. My hand has just fallen on the following letter, which is quite different from the preceding one and no less curious. It was sent me from Constantinople, September 22, 1900. Here it is:

Monsieur:

On behalf of the scientific research, based on experiment, to which you are faithfully consecrating so many hours, devoted to the furthering of public instruction, I have made it my duty to acquaint you with two cases observed by myself.

A gentleman, who is related to me, was at my house in Constantinople one day, at about half-past eleven in the morning, and said to me: “I don’t know why, but since this morning I have been obsessed with the thought that my aunt is dead at Geneva.” I asked him, then, if he thought his aunt was ill, and he answered that he had quarreled with his family ten years before, and had had no news of them since. But while we were talking and I was trying to prove to him what mere imagination his presentiment was, his servant came to my house, bringing him a telegram from Geneva, announcing the sudden death of his aunt, which had taken place that very morning.

This same gentleman, on the night of the thirty-first of last July, awoke with a start and said to his wife: “They have killed the King of Italy.”

His wife, thinking he was dreaming, did not answer him. The next morning she spoke to him about this dream, but he answered that it

was not a dream and that those words bad come out of his mouth without his being able to imagine how or why.

From the window they could see the harbor, and he himself said to his wife: "The best proof that the King of Italy isn't dead is that all the police-ships have raised their flags."

An hour later, he went back to the window and all the police-ships had their flags at half-mast. Astonished at this change, he ran out for information and learned that King Humbert had been assassinated during the night. Frightened at this coincidence, he came to consult me as an alienist, and asked me if this vision were not a grave symptom that something was wrong with his brain. I reassured him, but did not fail to take down notes on the case, especially because, as I have just told you, this man is perfectly well balanced and in all ways worthy of trust.

While awaiting a reply, I beg you to be good enough to pardon my boldness in addressing you without knowing you personally, and to accept my respectful homage.

Dr. L. Mougeri, Alienist of the Royal Italian Hospital, 20 rue Cabristan, Constantinople.

(Letter 943.)

We have here, as we see, two cases of telepathy, analogous though different: first, a death perceived at a distance, from Constantinople to Geneva, in a waking state; secondly, the assassination of the King of Italy, learned of during sleep. There can be no doubt of the perception of the two facts. Is the explanation the same for the two eases? In the first there was probably a special current between the aunt and the nephew, in the second case, a transmission through the general spherical waves. It is difficult to decide. It is because of this difficulty that the number of observations has a real value.

I have thanked the honorable doctor for adding this communication to so many others. No one has the right to deny these facts. It is senseless to see nothing in them but illusion; it is denying the sun at high noon. The

human being is still, for us, an unexplored mystery. The science taught in schools has followed the wrong track until now, and he who seeks for truth must henceforth be convinced that there exist unknown powers of the soul of the greatest importance, to be discovered, determined, and explained.

My opinion is that we ought, with an open mind, to investigate everything. Francisque Sarcey was gracious enough, one day, to show me a letter which he had just received about palmistry, dated March 22, 1899, and which began as follows:

No one admires more than I your good sense, and the excellent principles that you profess or the very prudent advice which you give the world in your chronicles. But no one can know everything, and the excellent good sense (a rare thing) that is most peculiarly characteristic of you, does not permit you, I admit, to fathom what at first seems unfathomable. In this you are diametrically opposed to Monsieur Flammarion, who himself possesses the real scientific sense. He rejects nothing without examination.

(Letter 841.)

A. DE M.

This letter continues with a dissertation upon palmistry that there is no need for us to discuss here. If I have reproduced this passage it is only to remind us of the care we must take to disdain nothing, in the hope that, unhindered by preconceived ideas, we may succeed in determining what is true and actual in psychic phenomena. Sarcey was all the kinder to show me this letter because he did not in the least believe in these phenomena.

Nevertheless, how numerous, how irrefutable are these phenomena! Let us no longer disdain them.

To prove, to discuss supra-normal powers of the soul! That is not always easy. The following case was sent me from Cette, January 20, 1912, and it was one of those which showed me how wise I had been to invite,

through the press, those who had had these experiences to be good enough to inform me, in the interest of our general understanding.

On a certain evening, I came out of the Grand Cafe at Cette, leaving a good friend of mine within, in perfect health. It was exactly midnight. I went to bed in excellent humor and slept the sleep of the just, with no other preoccupation than that of enjoying a well earned repose.

All at once, at three o'clock in the morning, I sat up in my bed, wakened by a frightful nightmare. I saw my comrade, his skull open, breathing his last, bidding me farewell and embracing me. It was horrible! I can still see clearly that frightful vision. I got up terrified, dressed, and waited for day in the hope that the distraction of the coming and going in the streets would drive away the frightful nightmare that obsessed me. At seven o'clock in the morning I set out from my home. They were just coming to tell me that my lamented comrade, Theaubon, while visiting a friend, had, after events that do not concern us here, jumped out of a window and broken his skull, which had caused instant death.

Stunned, overwhelmed, and still under the impression of my dream, I thought I was going to faint.

What I tell you is the exact truth, for I have too much respect and veneration for the great scholar whom I admire to tell him anything that is not literally true.

Louis Perier, Employed in the Town Hall at Cette.

(Letter 2220.)

How should we interpret this vision?

Did the spirit of the narrator see the accident at a distance or did the person appear and show himself?

We are familiar with so many cases of sight at a distance that the first explanation occurs to us.

However, the author did not see the accident, he saw his friend, his skull broken, breathing his last and embracing him.

But, on the other hand, if the dead man had been killed instantly, at a most tragic moment for himself, can we imagine I that he would have thought of his friend?

This is not probable, but after all it is possible; he had just left him, three hours before. We see how complex the question is.

Here is a very remarkable ease of the telepathic perception, on the part of a wife, of an accident occurring to her husband, at a distance, taken from “Phantasms of the Living.” It concerned Dr. Olivier, a physician at Huelgoat, Finistere, who writes:

On October 10, 1881, I received a professional call into the country about seven miles from my home. It was in the middle of the night, a very dark night. I started down a sunken road, above which rose trees that formed an arch overhead. The night was so dark that I could not see how to guide my horse and so let the animal choose his own path by instinct. It was about nine o’clock; the country road on which I happened to be at this moment was strewn with large round stones and sloped down steeply. The horse walked slowly, very slowly. All at once, the animal’s forefeet slipped and he fell, his mouth striking the ground. Naturally, I was thrown far over his head. My shoulder struck the earth and I fractured my collarbone.

At this very moment my wife, who was undressing at home and preparing to go to bed, had a strong inward feeling that an accident had happened to me; she was seized with a nervous trembling, began to cry, and called the maid: “Come quickly, I am frightened, some misfortune has happened to my husband; he is dead or injured.” Until my arrival she kept the servant beside her and did not cease weeping. She wished to send a man to find me, but she did not know to what village I had gone. I returned home about one o’clock in the morning and called the servant to bring me a light and unsaddle my horse. “I am hurt,” I said, “I can’t move my shoulder.”

My wife’s presentiment was confirmed.

A. Olivier, Physician at Huelgoat, Finistere.

I possess, in my collection, the accounts of a certain number of events similar to this, the perception of misfortune or accident at a distance. Further on we shall see one almost identical, which oddly enough occurred three quarters of an hour earlier.

The actual existence of the human soul is revealed by the evidence of psychic powers that cannot be attributed to matter and that are still far from having been sufficiently studied. Man does not yet know his true nature. He is endowed with hardly suspected powers, which his gradual evolution will develop. The classical schools of learning have taken the wrong path.

We see, touch, analyze, and dissect, in the human organism, only what is most apparent, most superficial, and most crude. We still ignore what subtleties it possesses inwardly, and nevertheless, this is what it is essential to understand. Analysis by experiment of the powers of the soul ought from now on to take the place of our former metaphysics and the words that represent it. The pretended knowledge of the soul has consisted, in fact, of words. There is very little reality beneath these expressions with which we have been contented for centuries, and which have never taught us anything. Another method is necessary from now on. This examination of the powers of the human soul will lead us to consider as exactly as possible all the actual observations which reveal them, and which prove the reality of such much-disputed, paradoxical happenings as the following:

The will acting without words and at a distance;

Psychic transmissions: telepathy;

Mental vision, by the spirit; the prevision of the future;

Manifestations of the dead at the moment of death—and after.

Diverse and independent observations all agree in affirming that there is in man an active psychic element, different from the properties of his material senses.

We are entering, here upon an immense world, newer than that which Christopher Columbus discovered on arriving at the so-called West Indies.

Is it from his own brain that the subject, who has been hypnotized can draw what he says, when he speaks of things that he does not understand; visits, mentally, houses that are unknown to him; treats of questions that are foreign to him; replies to unknown languages; hears the thought and not the words; feels what a person, near or far away, is thinking, or transports his spirits to a distance and describes scenes of which he can know nothing?

Let us cease basing our judgments on material appearances, on the classic physiology.

In general, we dare not confront the unknown, face it as a problem, an equation; we are inclined to believe we know everything (!) and that what is outside the limits of science is not worthy of examination.

Long ago, about the year 1865, I was almost alone in France in upholding the connection between solar activity and the diurnal oscillations of the magnetic needle. The astronomers, among others Monsieur Faye who, with LeVerrier, was the most celebrated of all, said I was mistaken. For them the observed correspondences were only fortuitous.

Kepler's sentence, comparing the sun to a magnet, Corpus Solis esse mangneticum,[4] was my own, his humble disciple's; the physicists would not admit it. The sun, they proclaimed, could not be a magnet, since the magnetism of an iron bar is lost when it is heated.

But the sun, despite its 6500 degrees of heat, is a magnetic center, and now (1919) they have found the means even of measuring the magnetism of the individual spots! It is thus that science itself is transformed. We are far from understanding "reality" in anything whatever.

[4] Kepleri Opera omnio, III, 304, ed. Frisch; see my Etudos sur l'Astronomie, I(1867), 117.

Apropos of the constant observations that any one can make on the difference between reality and appearance, I have just caught sight of the following note. I wrote it in my observatory at Juvisy on November 13, 1917:

On this cold morning, the solar disk is a burning red. The atmosphere is impregnated with a half-transparent fog. Lovely winter landscape, although a great number of trees still keep their green foliage. Many red and yellow. Many entirely bare. If, because of atmospheric conditions, the sun constantly appeared as red as this, we should believe this was its natural color. No one would ever have seen it white. It is thus with a great many things. Our impressions form the natural basis of our judgments.

This is perhaps the hundredth tune I have seen the sun like this and have made the same reflections. The same may be true of all our sensations.

As I transcribe this note, I can add to it what I have said very often for fifty years: if the atmosphere were even more opaque, or constantly covered with clouds, neither the sun nor the stars would ever be visible, the solar system would remain unknown, and the human race would remain irretrievably in the most absolute ignorance of reality.

What shall we think now of persons which are psychic, psychic in different degrees? They are more numerous than one imagines; Goethe and Schumann were remarkable types of them. We shall speak further on of Goethe in Connection with ‘‘double personalities.’’ Let us notice in passing a curious telepathic experience of Schumann’s. In a letter written in the year 1833, to Clara Wick, he relates what follows:

I must tell you of a presentiment that I have just had: it has haunted me from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-seventh of March, while I was absorbed in my new compositions.

There is a certain passage that obsessed me, and some one seemed to repeat after me, from the depths of his heart: “Ach, Gott!” While I was

composing I saw funereal things, coffins, despairing faces. When I had finished I sought for a title. The only one that came to my mind was: Leichenphantasie (Funereal Fantasy). Wasn't it extraordinary'? I was so much upset that tears came to my eyes; I really did not know why; it was impossible for me to discover a reason for this sadness. Then came Therese's letter and everything was explained.

His sister-in-law wrote him that his brother Edward had just died. Schumann gave the name of Nachtstucke (Nocturne) to this piece that he had at first wished to call Leichenphantasie.[5]

Presentiments appear under all forms. An examination of them would fill an enormous volume.[6] I shall point out one more of the most extraordinary, experienced by a great lady across the channel, Lady Eardley, who related it in the following words to Mr. Myers:[7]

When I was a young girl of about sixteen I had a light attack of measles. I was living with my grandfather and grandmother. After three or four days in my room, they told me I could take a warm bath. I was overjoyed, and since I felt much better I went to the bath-room and undressed; hut just as I was about to enter the water I heard a voice say to me, "Open the door." The voice was distinct, quite external, and yet seemed to come in some way from myself. I cannot say whether it was a man's or a woman's voice. I was astonished and looked about me. Naturally no one was there. A second time I heard, "Open the door!" I began to be frightened, saying to myself: "I must be mad or ill." But I did not feel ill. I decided to think no more of it and was already in the bath when I heard for a third, and I think for a fourth time the same words spoken. I made a bound, opened the door, and came back to the bath. As I stepped into it I fainted and fell fiat in the water. Fortunately I was able to seize the bell-rope that hung on the wall close to the bath. The chambermaid arrived and found me, she says, with my head under

[5] Shumann: sa vie et ses aeuvres, by Louis Schneider and Marcel Mareschal
[6] We find in the writings of Daniel Defoe, the author of Robinson Crusoe, the story of the fire at London that was foreseen by one of his friends, a lady, and which he speaks of in his Vision of the Angelic World; a case very like that of the Princess de Conti, who saved her children
[7] Annales des Sciences psychiques, 1889, p. 197

water. She seized me and carried me out of the room; my head struck against the door, which brought me to my senses at once. If the door had been closed I should certainly have been drowned.

How extraordinary! What was this voice'? Whence did it come'? Probably from the young girl herself, who may have thought of a possible weakness. What variety there is in all these incomprehensible warnings! Yes, the human soul is gifted with powers unknown to the science of today.

Our psychic mentality, which is in general submerged in our material being, shows itself in certain examples that are well known but have been poorly explained by the blind physiological skepticism of the modern schools. Among others, let us recall the following events in the life of Jeanne d'Arc:

Jeanne said to the soldier of Chinon, who had cursed her when she was entering the chateau: "Ah! You deny God, and yet you are so near your death!" That very evening the soldier was accidentally drowned.

At other times, and more often, it is Jeanne herself who attests that she is warned by "her voices." At Vaucouleurs she goes directly to the lord of Baudricourt, without having ever seen him: ''I recognized him," she explained, ''thanks to my voice; it said to me: 'There he is!'"

At Chignon, when she had been brought into the king's presence, Jeanne recognized him unhesitatingly among the three hundred courtiers in the midst of whom lie had disguised himself under a borrowed coat. She asked him for a private interview in which she recalled to him, to convince him of her mission, the words of the silent prayer that he had already addressed to God, alone in his oratory, a prayer concerning his contested legitimacy.

It is once more her voices which inform her that the hammer of Charles Martel is buried in the church of Saint Catherine de Fierbois; which waken her at Orleans when, worn out with fatigue, she has flung herself on her bed in ignorance of the attack on the fortress of Saint-Loup; which warn her that she will be wounded by a dart on May 7, 1429, at the attack of Tournelles.

At the siege of Orleans she warns Glandale that he will perish “without losing blood, within three days.” As a matter of fact, at the capture of Tournelles, Glandale falls in the Loire and is drowned. And so on.

Whence came these voices? In all probability from herself. But they closely touched the invisible world.

Jeanne d‘Arc was a rare type of these sensitive beings endowed with supra-normal faculties; but there are many others who approach this state.

These manifestations of the spirit are only just beginning to be studied by the method of experiment; again we ought to state that in this order of phenomena we can almost never experiment, but only observe, which greatly reduces the field of study. Also, the conditions of organic, earthly life are so crude that we are in much the same situation as that of a man who tried to make astronomical observations in a country where the sky was almost continually overcast.

These exceptional conditions are the more to be regretted because the problem of the soul, which is the same as that of its survival, is undeniably the most interesting and important of all questions, for it concerns ourselves, our inner nature, our immortality or our annihilation.

We shall study, in the next chapters, the undeniable cases of mental vision, by means of the spirit, as well as the vision of future happenings before they occur, and we shall have there, also, convincing evidence of the transcendent faculties of the soul.

To see the future exactly, or to see what is happening a thousand miles away, —what could be more incredible, and yet more certain?

The power of foreseeing the future will be studied here in a special chapter. What is time? How is the future made?

The problems worthy of our attention are so numerous and so vast that their explanation is never finished and our curiosity is constantly renewed by their study. The everyday banalities of life do not satisfy intellectual beings, for they know that to live intellectually is to live twice

as fully, and they love to live by thought. Let us continue our comparative study.

A learned schoolmaster, Monsieur Savelli, at Costa in Corsica, wrote to me in 1912:

It is clear that these questions interest readers to the highest degree, and I know that I am speaking for them when I beg you to continue your teachings.

The question of the nature of time must be very difficult to solve. To a seeker who asked a famous mathematician to define it, the latter replied: "Let us speak of something else!" Nevertheless, I think it my duty to submit to you some very disturbing observations that it is impossible to doubt.

(1) One evening my father, returning home with a friend, was surprised to hear cries of distress; women were weeping and exclaiming. They thought that some calamity had occurred, that perhaps some one had been killed: they looked at the house from which these lamentations had just come and stopped, but utter silence followed the outcries. The next evening at the same hour, when he passed the house again, my father heard the same groans. This time they were real. A child, who had not been ill the evening before, had been seized with croup during the day and had just died very suddenly. This event took place at Ville-de-Paraso, a neighboring commune to that in which I exercise the functions of a teacher.

(2) Monsieur Napoleoni, a retired quartermaster, has told me the following experience: "We were coming home about midnight, passing, in the most profound silence, two isolated houses, when we heard loud blows repeated at regular intervals that vibrated in the silence of the night. It seemed to us that some one was striking wood with a hammer. I will not deny that my hair rose on my head and I returned home very much stirred by this inexplicable phenomenon. Two days later, I chanced to be in the same spot where those strange noises had astounded me and I heard them again: it was the village carpenter, who was nailing up the coffin of the shepherd who had died the evening before."

(3) The day on which the Massoni bandits murdered Dr. Malaspina of Costa, my uncle, Costa Michelangelo, who is still alive and who was then (1850) a pupil in the lycee of Bastia, had the sensation of being seized in an invisible clutch that paralyzed all his movements. The maternal grandparent of my uncle was the sister of Dr. Malaspina.

(Letter 2230.)

Of these three events, the first two are premonitions[8] and the third is a sort of telepathic sensation of which one can read many hundreds of examples in my work "L'Inconnu." They are unexplained and inexplicable, in the present state of science! But they are irrefutable and confirm one another; their study will throw light upon our own consciousness, which is still so little advanced, for we are ignorant most of all of our own nature. Let us therefore not neglect it.

We are beginning to understand telepathic transmissions through the discovery of the wireless telegraph, but nothing has yet put us upon the track of the explanation of premonitory events that, although incontestable, are so difficult to admit. The principal difficulty lies in the contradiction that seems to exist between the vision of future events, of which we shall give absolute proof here, and our sense of free will.

Without taking up, for the moment, the question of these particular cases, and in order to keep to the question of principle, I shall say at once that from now on we can no longer have any doubt about the fact that in certain circumstances future events have been seen and described in advance, exactly and explicitly. To this statement I may add, in the second place, that this fact of observation must be reconciled with free will. Time is not what it seems to us. It does not exist in itself. Eternity is motionless and always present. One day a French cardinal, in close relations with Pope Leo XIII, was discussing this question with me during a walk in a garden at Nancy, and maintained that premonitions could not be reconciled with free will.

"You believe in the existence of God?" I asked him. "I feel sure you do not doubt it. You believe with all the theologians, and with Cicero, as well as

[8] We shall see others in Chap. IX, "Knowledge of the Future."

with your predecessor, the Bishop of hippo, that God knows the future?”—“Assuredly, yes.”—“You also admit free will and the responsibility of Christians? —“Yes.” —“Well, in what way does the admission of these premonitory events differ from this doctrine?”

As for time, the past no longer exists, the future does not yet exist: only the present exists. But what is the present? The present hour? Not that. This very moment? No. A second? No. A tenth of a second? No. A hundredth of a second? Not that either. A millionth of a second? Even that is very long for an electrician. Let us admit it, however, if you wish. That, then, is the present, reality. You must admit that it is not very substantial.

As time does not exist in itself and is measured in our spirit only by our sensations, the chain of events is like a present that unrolls continually, and to watch this unrolling does not prevent the human will from playing its part in it.

The problem remains, nonetheless, both very complex and very curious. This vision of the future will be especially proved in Chapters VIII and IX.

Let me repeat that we live in the midst of a world of which we know only the surface, and we can barely guess at the inner realities. There exist, between these realities and our souls, affinities, relations, an intercourse that are still unknown.

I shall conclude this chapter with a letter which I received while I was classifying the documents and manuscripts concerned with this work. It comes from an eminent mind whose character is coldly positive, a former student at the Ecole Polytechnique, chief engineer of bridges and highways, life member of the Astronomical Society of France, and an impartial judge of great or little events. Here is the letter:

GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO

Bureau of Public Works Chief Engineer

Tangier, July 6, 1918.

My dear Master:

As you have made a special study of "unknown natural forces," permit me to inform you, without comment or any attempt at explanation, of two events, one of which took place yesterday, the other a year ago, and the chief interest of which lies, for me, in the fact that, being the person concerned, I can guarantee their authenticity.

First event: I possess, for my observations of the heavens, an electric clock from Leroy, a clock that runs, as you know, by means of batteries for four years and does not stop until the batteries are exhausted; this clock has run for three and a half years in my workroom and has never suffered the least derangement. But yesterday while friends were enjoying some music at my house, in another room than that in which the clock stood, I suddenly looked at my watch and noticed that it was twenty minutes before midnight. I do not know why, but as soon as I had consulted my watch, and for the first time since owning the clock, I began to think that the batteries had only a few more months to run, and that perhaps it would be well for me to set about replacing them, as it was possible that they would not run as they were guaranteed to do, for the full four years; then I thought no more about it.

Half an hour later, when my friends had left, I came back into my workroom, and what was my stupefaction to find that my electric clock, which, as I repeat, had run for three and a half years without stopping once, had ceased running at exactly twenty minutes before twelve; the batteries were not used up and I only needed to push the pendulum to set it going again.

Porche-Banes.

I can imagine no better than could the observer any explanation for this curious happening, unless it is that our spirit perceives certain things by means of powers that are still unknown. We might suppose that when the pendulum had completely stopped, the learned engineer was unconsciously struck by this stoppage and, also unconsciously, looked at his watch and thought of the clock entirely by chance! But no; the sensation was experienced in another room, where it could not be heard. And, for that matter, what is chance? A veil before unknown

explanations. Why did the clock stop, as the battery was not exhausted? A grain of dust? Dryness? Electric fatigue? Other imagined hypotheses? These interpretations are inadequate to explain the psychic correspondence.

Here is the second event spoken of in the same letter.

A year ago, in the light sleep one falls into toward the end of night, I saw in my dreams a certain person from Tunis whom I scarcely knew, as I had met her only twice during the eight years that I had passed in Tunis. I had left that country nine years before and in consequence I had not seen her for fifteen years. I repeat that I had also never thought of her; she was some one entirely indifferent to me, with whom I had never even entered into any relations and of whom I had no reason to think. It was absolutely extraordinary that her image should have come back to me in a dream.

But the same morning, an hour after arriving at my office, they brought me the card of this person, who had arrived for a trip into Morocco and remembering, as vaguely as I did, that she had met me in Tunis, had stopped, as she passed through, to see if I were still here. At the moment of my dream the boat that was bringing the person in question to Tangier was at the entrance of the harbor, but I suspected nothing, least of all that the person in question was on board.

I do not know whether these two anecdotes will interest you, but I guarantee their absolute authenticity.

You know, as far as that goes, that I am a "scientific person" and that I reason out my sensations.

If one calculates the probability of one of these events, still more of both of them, being produced by chance, one will find it infinitely small.

Porche Banes. (Letter 4041.)

So far as this second case is concerned, we have the beginning of an explanation through the ether waves, of which we shall speak later in the chapter on Telepathy.

What we ought to admit, without the least doubt, is that the science of the future should seek to explain the powers of the soul that are still unknown to the science of to-day, or that have been too little studied until now.

The following pages will plunge us into such a study, while at the same time they draw the necessary distinctions; will acting through mental suggestion, telepathy, and psychic transmissions at a distance; mental vision, by means of the spirit; vision of the future. These indubitable documents prove a spiritual existence of the soul independent of the physical powers of the senses.

The soul and the body are too different entities, endowed with different attributes.

Chapter 5. The Will, Acting Without The Spoken Word, Without A Sign, And At A Distance

Science is forced, by the eternal law of honor, to look squarely at any problem which appears frankly before it.

Sir William Thomson.

Of the many different manifestations of our psychic being, one of the most remarkable is, assuredly, the action of the human will, without the intervention of the spoken word, or of any sign, and at a distance.

The will is an essentially immaterial faculty, distinct from what we generally mean when we speak of the properties of “matter.” You can act upon the brain of another person through the force of your spirit. In a theater, in a church, several yards behind him, you can force him to turn without his suspecting your action, without his being aware of your presence. The experience is far from rare, and after eliminating the eases due to chance, there remain a respectable number of authentic declarations, even where an unknown person is concerned.

In the case of a person known to the experimenter, already in touch with him, the effect takes place far more frequently. It proves nonetheless surely the action of the will at a distance.

The materialistic, critic might maintain that it was a matter of the exercise of an unknown sense belonging to the brain and that this exercise did not prove its spiritual origin. The objection is easy to answer. The brain is a material organ. It is once more the story of the electric apparatus. Behind the apparatus, at the back of the brain, there is a personality. When I speak it is because I think speech; language is the effect, not the cause. To imagine an apparatus, a brain endowed with a responsible, mental personality, willful, capricious, reasoning, reflective, is to raise up an hypothesis that would have to be proved. Is not our own sensation there to make us understand the truth?

In the exercise of the five senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, the vibratory movement goes from the external world to the brain, being transmitted to it by the aid of the nerves—the optic, auditory, olfactory, tactile. In the exercise of the will, operating at a distance, in the transmission of thought, the vibratory movement goes, on the contrary, from the brain to the exterior world. Within the brain there is the active cause, the soul.

Entire works have been written about mental suggestion, and the examples that prove it are innumerable. I myself have observed several, in the past, in the experiences of Charcot, at La Salpetriere, and of Dr. Luys, at La Charite. One of the most striking is, perhaps, the experiments of Pierre Janet, at Havre, on a good, honest peasant, the mother of a family, not in the least neurotic. What he ordered her to do, while he was several miles from her, she understood mentally and obeyed him with absolute precision, and without there being any way in which she could have been made aware of it.[1]

Does the will reveal a psychic personality, an individuality, a spirit, a soul? Is this a more certain interpretation than that which admits only physico-chemical powers belonging to the brain matter? Does the “I” exist? To ask the question is to answer it.

We are going to prove, from very carefully observed examples of mental suggestion, that through orders from the mind, transmitted from one being to another, without words, without gestures, but through will alone the human personality clearly manifests itself.

The well-known experiences of Dr. Ochorowicz will enable the reader to judge impartially, with full knowledge of the situation.

The doctor had under his care a lady affected with hysterical epilepsy, in which the malady of many years standing had been aggravated by an access of suicidal mania.

This lady, twenty-seven years old, strong and well built, had the appearance of perfect health. Her gay and active temperament was

[1] One can read these details, as well as many other experiences, in the work of Dr. Ochorowicz, De la suggestion mentale (Paris, 1887). See also Jules Liegeois, De la suggestion et du somnambulisme (Paris, 1887); Pierre Janet, l’Automatisme psychologique (Paris, 1903); Dr. Joire, Annales des Sciences psychologique (Paris, 1897).

united with an extreme inner moral sensibility, which was not externally evident. Her character was extremely truthful, profoundly good, with a tendency to self-sacrifice. She had remarkable intelligence, many talents, powers of observation, a weak will and painful indecision at times, at others an exceptional firmness; the least moral fatigue, any little unexpected impression, pleasant as well as painful, reverberated, although slowly and insensibly, in the vaso-motors and brought on an attack, a paroxysm, or a nervous fainting-fit.

Dr. Ochorowicz writes:

One day, or rather one night, when her attack, including the phase of delirium, had come to an end, the patient fell peacefully asleep. Suddenly she awoke and seeing her friend and me beside her, she begged us to go away and not to tire ourselves uselessly on her account. She insisted so much that, in order to avoid a nervous crisis, we took our leave. I went slowly down the stairway—she lived on the third floor—and stopped several times to listen, troubled by a presentiment of evil, for she had wounded herself several times a few days before. Once in the court, I stopped again, wondering whether or not I ought to leave. Suddenly the window opened noisily and I saw the body of the patient lean quickly out. I dashed toward the spot where she might fall, and mechanically, without attaching any importance to it, I concentrated all my will to oppose her fall. It was mad. I merely imitated the billiard players who, foreseeing that a shot is going to miss, try to stop the ball by gestures or by words.

Nevertheless, the patient, already far out, stopped and drew back, jerkily.

The same maneuver was repeated four or five times and finally the patient, as if wearied, stood motionless, her back pressed against the frame of the still-open window.

She could not see me; I was in the shadow; it was night. At this moment Mademoiselle X—, the patient's friend, ran in and caught her by the arms. I heard them struggling and ran up the stairway to help. I found the patient in a paroxysm of madness. She did not recognize us but took us for brigands. I succeeded in forcing her from the window only by

exercising the ovarion pressure, which made her fall on her knees. Several times she tried to bite me, and it was only after great difficulty that I succeeded in putting her hack to bed. At last I got her to sleep.

As soon as she was in a hypnotic state, her first words were, "Thank you, and forgive me."

Then she told me that she had been determined to throw herself from the window, but each time she felt herself supported from beneath.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I don't know."

"You did not suspect ray presence?"

"No, it was precisely because I thought you had gone away that I wished to carry out my plan. However, it seemed to me at moments that you were beside me or behind me and that you did not wish me to fall."

Here is another experience from the same source:

It was my custom to put the patient to sleep every other day and to leave her in a deep sleep while I took notes. After an experience of two months, I could be certain that she would not stir before I approached her to induce the real state of somnambulism. But on this day, after having taken several notes and without changing my attitude (I was a few yards from her and outside her field of vision, my note-book on my knees and my head leaning on my left hand), I pretended to write, scratching my pen, but inwardly concentrating my will on an order which I gave mentally.

I "Lift the right hand."

(I look at the patient through the fingers of the left hand pressed against my forehead.)

One minute: no action.

Two minutes: agitation of the right hand.

Three minutes: the agitation increases. The patient rubs her lids and lifts her right hand.

I confess that this experience stirs me more than anything ever has. I begin again:

II "Rise and come to me."

She rubs her eyes, stirs, rises slowly, and comes to mc with difficulty, her hand outstretched.

I lead her back to her place without speaking.

III "Draw the bracelet oil the left wrist and hand it to me."

No action.

She stretches out her left hand, rises, and goes towards Mademoiselle X—, then toward the piano.

I touch her right arm and probably push it a little in the direction of her left arm, while I concentrate my thought on the order given.

She draws off her bracelet, seems to think, and hands it to me.

IV "Rise, approach the arm-chair by the table, and sit down beside us."

She rises, rubs her eyelids, and walks toward me.

"I must do something else," she says.

She searches—touches the table—moves a cup of tea.

She draws back, takes hold of the arm-chair, pushes it toward the table with a smile of satisfaction, and sits down, limp with fatigue.

All these orders have been given mentally and without gestures, without pronouncing a single word.

There are in the works of Ochorowicz forty-one accounts of experiences of the same order, given after this one.

My readers are already familiar with those which I have published in "L'Inconnu," in the chapter on the psychic action of one spirit upon another (notably, pages 296—316).

These conclusive experiments made on the action of the will, and on mental suggestion, cannot be attributed to matter, to chemical combinations, to mechanical movements: their cause is a thought, a mental cause, a spiritual principle acting under a still-unknown form, but of which we can form an image by means of the wireless telegraph and telephone.

Such cases of mental suggestion were studied long since by Mesmer, and before him by Van Helmont. Here, among others, is a remarkable experience related by a judicial witness, the scholar Seifert, who at first considered all this "humbug."

One day they brought in some papers; in one of them there was a tale concerning Mesmer, according to which he had provoked convulsions among some epileptics while he remained hidden in a neighboring chamber and merely moved his fingers in the direction of the invalids.

Seifert arrived at the castle, the paper in his hand, and found Mesmer surrounded by gentlemen. He asked him if what they said of him in this paper was true, and Mesmer confirmed the report. Then, with considerable audacity, Seifert demanded, or almost demanded, proof by experiment, of this influence through a wall.

Mesmer stood a few feet from the wall, while Seifert, as the observer, placed himself in the half-opened doorway so that he could see at the same time both the hypnotist and his subject.

Mesmer first made several rectangular movements from one side to the other, with the index finger of his left hand, in the presumed direction of the invalid. The latter soon began to complain; he touched his sides and seemed to be in pain.

"What is the matter with you 'P asked Seifert. "I feel uncomfortable," he said. Not satisfied with this reply, Seifert demanded a more exact description of what he felt. "I feel," said the subject, "as if everything in

me were swinging from right to left." In order to avoid asking questions Seifert told him to describe any changes lie felt in his body, without waiting for a request. A few moments later Mesmer made some oval motions with his fingers. "Now everything is turning about me as if in a circle," said the invalid.

Mesmer ceased all action and almost at once the invalid declared that he no longer felt anything. And so it went on. All these statements corresponded perfectly not only with the moments of action and with the intervals between, but also with the character of the sensations that Mesmer wished to provoke.[2]

I have seen the same things performed by my regretted friend, Colonel de Rochas, at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, by Dr. Barety at Nice, and by other experimenters. The action of the will at a distance is not subject to doubt, as those who have studied this subject know very well.

Van Helmont, a great physician and a great dreamer of the seventeenth century, had propounded the question before Mesmer, and he is very explicit on this point. He believes that all men are capable of influencing, at a distance, those Like themselves, but that generally this force remains dormant in us, stifled by ''the flesh." To succeed, there is required a certain agreement between the operator and the patient. The latter must be sensitive and so practiced in his sensibility that, under the influence of his inner imagination he goes forward to meet the action. "It is especially in the pit of the stomach that this magic action makes itself felt, for the sensations of the stomach are more delicate than those in the fingers or even in the eyes. Sometimes the patient cannot bear even to have a hand placed over this region."

He wrote:

I have waited until now to reveal a great mystery; that there is in man such a power that by his will alone and by his imagination he can act outside himself, and impress a lasting influence on an object very far

[2] Dr. J. Kerner, Franz Anton Mesmer (Frankfort, 1856), quoted in Ochorowicz, Suggestion Mentale, p. 402

away. This mystery alone throws sufficient light upon many events difficult to understand and which are related to the magnetism of all bodies, to the mental power of man and his domination of the universe.[3]

Van Helmont lived from 1577 to 1644. Let us open the work of Kircher, "Magnes, sive de Arte magnetica,'' published at Rome in 1641, at the chapter on animal magnetism (Ζωομαγνητισμοζ). We shall find here examples of "sympathy and antipathy," of the "magnetic power of the human members," of the ''magnetism of music."

These psychic experiences do not date merely from today. They go back to Jesus Christ, to Pythagoras, and even farther.

But what is mental suggestion?

The hypnotizers believe that their will concentrates "the fluid" and afterward projects it forth, in an approximate direction, like a package of opium. This fluid is so intelligent and so amenable that it rushes out, finds the right way, turns corners, and falls upon its subject. It overwhelms him, and at the moment when the subject is sufficiently saturated, the sleep occurs, whether the subject be near or remote. This is quite clear, as clear as that old explanation of the action of opium, according to which, as Moliere said, "It puts people to sleep because it possesses the power of putting people to sleep."

Only, "we should first have to prove that the fluid exists," wrote Ochorowicz, in this connection, "then that it can be projected, then that it can find its path, and finally that it can stop exactly in the nervous system of the subject." It seems to me that it would be prudent to limit ourselves to the expression "psychic force," which I proposed before 1865.[4]

There can be no doubt of the psychic action of one spirit upon another, whatever may be the mode of transmission.

Do ideas travel? They are transmitted by the vibrations of ether. We know already that ideas send their dynamic complement everywhere,

[3] Van Helmont, Opera omnia (Frankfort, 1682), p. 731. Ochorowicz, suggestion mentale, p. 405.
[4] Les Forces naturelles inconnues, ed. 1865, p. 135; ed. 1907, p. 11.

that is to say, all about the emission. If it is not a substance that is transported, it is a wave that spreads. The action is general, but it remains more or less unfelt until it finds a suitable milieu and all the necessary conditions for a reversible transmission. The wave starts from a will, A; a brain, B, unites these conditions; the corresponding idea acts in it, and it falls asleep if the hypnotist commands it to do so.

One might object that all sensitive brains that are within the sphere of action ought to do the same. No, for all these brains are not trained, all these brains are not in touch with the operator.

In order to explain mental suggestion and the transmission of thought, the hypnotists have proposed the hypothesis of a transmission by induction similar to that of one electric current on another, without material contact, or like that of the Hertzian waves, as in wireless telegraphy.

Mental action at a distance may be conscious or unconscious.

What physicists proposed timidly, thirty years ago, as matters of observation that might be well discussed, and at which we have seen more than one skeptic, sure of his knowledge, smile disdainfully, is no longer open to discussion. For we see similar transmissions produced in the practice of wireless telegraphy, which has been invented since, and of which the following is a resume:

In this sort of telegraphy, perhaps the most marvelous of all the phenomena of telegraphy, we make use of the Hertzian waves by the intermittent discharge of a powerful condenser that is fed by a strong electric generator. These waves spread through space at the rate of 300,000 kilometers a second. They radiate from the antenna that is joined to the transmitting apparatus and are picked up, at a distance, by means of another antenna.

The antenna consists, essentially, of one or more wires that are completely isolated from any electric contact with any external object and are in communication only with the transmitting apparatus or with the receiver.

These Hertzian waves do not act upon us; not one of our senses can discern them. Therefore a special apparatus is necessary to hear them: this apparatus is a detector. In the detector the Hertzian wave is, so to speak, transformed, and becomes perceptible to our ears by means of a telephone receiver.

These waves are widely separated one from another—like the waves produced on a sheet of water by the fall of a solid body—by a certain distance that is called the wavelength. This wavelength can be varied at the transmitter by means of special apparatus. But in order to have the greatest possible intensity of the waves, on their reception, as well as perfect clearness of sound, it is necessary that the receiving apparatus should be in unison and accord with the transmitting apparatus. To speak in terms of wireless telegraphy, the apparatus must be syntonized.

This accord is brought about at the receiving post, by inserting between the antenna and the detector a self inducting spool, with a regulating slide.

In this way the operators find the positions that correspond to the greatest wave-length of the post from which they wish to receive, and in this apparatus for attaining precision they manage to eliminate completely the other posts that are sending messages at the same time, —but messages of different wave-lengths. These wavelengths act upon the receiving apparatus according to the different positions of the self-regulating spools and according to the different capacities of the condensers.

The various transmissions, sent in different wavelengths, move simultaneously through space, without any ear being able to perceive them; but we intercept the messages we wish to receive by regulating the slide; and we hear what we wish to hear, to the exclusion of anything else, as two persons speaking together understand each other.

This quite modern invention of wireless telegraphy (and now that of the wireless telephone) helps us to understand the method of transmission of thought at a distance. Science will make many other discoveries, which will alter our interpretations of phenomena. What is certain is that

it is wrong for us to deny what we cannot explain. Without these inventions of contemporary physics, the human will would nonetheless be able to make itself felt at a distance and thus prove to us that it exists and makes use of the brain as of an apparatus.

One day during the war with Germany of 1914—18, I was in communication from my observatory at Juvisy with the Eiffel Tower by means of the wireless telegraph, when I was surprised to hear a conversation between two speakers situated I knew not where, whose voices were as clear as voices in a drawing-room or in a lecture hall. This telephone, which operated without any conductor, at the time unknown, seemed to me more striking, more astounding than the transmission of the little telegraphic shocks of the Morse system, for that consists of the transmission of the Hertzian waves across the ether and at such distances that the sounds could not be heard: at the telephone, on the other hand (no one thinks of this), it is not the voice which is transmitted but an electric wave which becomes a voice again.

We know, on the other hand, that the transmission of thoughts between two people more or less separated from each other is experimentally certain.

We know also, from telepathic observations, that the spirit of a dying person, breathing his last, far away, sometimes acts with such intensity that the brain toward which his thought is turned is impressed to the point not merely of hearing him, but even of seeing him, in a form that is reconstituted by this sensation and at times to the accompaniment of fearful sounds.

This is a new aspect of the universe, for our philosophical contemplation, which we were far from foreseeing only thirty years ago.

Inert matter disappears under the invisible radiation of energy; what exists in cosmic life is energy, ethereal force, movement.

I wrote in “L’Inconnu” (page 378):

Without doubt, our psychic force gives birth to an ethereal movement that is projected to a distance like all the vibrations of ether and is felt

by those brains in harmony with our own. The transformation of a psychic action into an ethereal movement, and back, may be similar to that which we observe in the telephone, where the receiving disk, which is identical with the sending disk, recreates the sound-movement that was transferred not by sound but by electricity. But these are only comparisons.

The action of one spirit on another, at a distance, especially in such grave circumstances as that of death—and in particular of sudden death—the transmission of thought, mental suggestion, communication at a distance, are not more extraordinary than the action of a magnet on iron, the attraction of the moon for the sea, the carrying of the human voice by electricity, the discovery of chemical construction of a star through the analysis of its light, and other marvels of contemporary science. Only, these psychic transmissions are of a higher order and may set us on the road to knowledge of the human being.

These lines were written by me in 1899. We have every reason to think the same today, and even to strengthen our comparisons, which have been confirmed and developed by the recent discovery of the wireless telegraph, and above all by the transmission of speech by the wireless telephone.

A case of will acting through thought alone is shown by the following experiment made on his wife by my friend and colleague Monsieur Schmoll:

On June 9, 1887, a warm and stormy day, I was taking my siesta swinging in a hammock that was hung in the dining room and reading a pamphlet by Monsieur Edm. Gurnet. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Not far from me, my wife was resting in an armchair; she was sleeping heavily. When I saw her thus, the idea came to me to give her, mentally, the order to wake. So I looked at her fixedly and, concentrating all my will in an imperious command, I cried out to her in my mind: "Wake up! I wish you to awake!" When three or four minutes had passed without my obtaining the least result—for my wife

continued to sleep peacefully—I gave up the experiment, saying to myself that, after all, I should have been very much astonished to see it succeed. I tried it again, however, a few minutes later, with no more success than the first time. At that I began to read again, and had soon completely forgotten my unsuccessful attempt.

All at once, ten minutes later, my wife awoke, rubbed her eyes, and, looking at me with a surprised and somewhat annoyed air, said:

"What do you want? Why did you wake me?"

"I haven't said anything!"

"But you have. You have just been tormenting me to make me wake up."

"You are joking. I haven't opened my mouth."

"Can I have dreamed it?" she said hesitating. "Yes, it is true. I remember now, I simply dreamed it all."

"Come, what did you dream? Perhaps it was interesting," I said, smiling.

"I had a very disagreeable dream," she went on. "I thought I was at the cross-roads of Courbevoie. It was windy and the weather was overcast. All at once I saw a human form—was it a man or a woman?—wrapped in a white sheet, roll to the foot of the slope. It made vain efforts to rise; I wished to run to its help, but I felt myself held back by an influence which I did not at first notice, but that I finally understood to be you, who were determined that I should abandon the images of my dream. 'Come, wake up!' you shouted at me. But I resisted you and I was perfectly aware of struggling successfully against the awakening that you were forcing upon me. However, when I awoke, just now, your command, 'Come, wake up I' was still sounding in my ears."

My wife was very much astonished to learn that I had really ordered her, in my mind, to awake. She did not know what book I was reading and psychic problems have never interested her very much. She has never been hypnotized, either by me or by any one else.

A. Schmoll, 6 rue de Fourcroy, Paris.

I have many other observations of the same sort among my documents. Certainly, everything here cannot be explained. Why should there be a ten-minute interval between the order and the result? Monsieur Schmoll is used to scientific methods. We owe many excellent observations of the sun to him; he was my collaborator at the founding of the Astronomical Society of France in 1887. The event reported can neither be doubted nor attributed to coincidence.

To see by the mind, in the mind, is of frequent occurrence with somnambulists, as can be proved by the works of Deleuze, Dupotet, Lafontaine, and Charpignon. The last is very positive on this point:

We have many times formed in our minds fictitious images, and the somnambulists whom we questioned have seen these images. We have often obtained a word, a sign, an action because of a mental demand. Others, when they addressed questions to somnambulists in foreign languages unknown to the hypnotized patients, have obtained replies, showing a knowledge not of the idiom but of the thought of the speaker, for if the experimenter spoke without understanding what he said, the somnambulist remained powerless to grasp the sense of the question.

The act of putting a subject to sleep, at a distance, and suggesting to him in this state acts which he accomplished quite as well as when under the influence of an oral suggestion, was successfully tried many times by the hypnotists of old.

My friend of fifty years, Dr. Macario, relates[5] how one evening Dr. Gromier, after having put to sleep a hysterical woman by hypnotism, asked permission of her husband to make an experiment; and this is what happened. Without uttering a word he led her out into the open sea, —mentally, of course. The invalid was at ease as long as the waters were quiet; but the hypnotist soon raised a frightful storm in her mind, and the invalid began to utter piercing shrieks and to clutch at near-by objects. Her voice, her tears, the expression of her face indicated great terror. Then, still in his mind, he brought the waves gradually back

[5] Du Sommeil, des reves et du somnambulism (Lyons and Paris, 1857), p. 185.

within reasonable limits. They ceased to rock the ship, and as they grew less, calm returned to the mind of the somnambulist, although she still panted and trembled nervously in all her limbs. “Never take me on the ocean!” she cried passionately, a moment later; “it frightens me too much! And that wretched captain who wouldn’t let us up on the bridge!” This exclamation astounded us the more,” said Monsieur Gromier, “because I had not uttered a single word that could have shown her the nature of the experiment I intended to make.”

Macario remarks:

This power, the transmission of thought, explains a great number of somnambulistic phenomena that one would be tempted, otherwise, to attribute to supernatural influences. It explains, for example, the gift of languages that is said to have been sometimes observed in somnambulists—that is to say, the power of understanding what is said to them in a foreign language unknown to them or of replying by expressions belonging to a language of which they have no knowledge; for if it is true that the somnambulist perceives your thought, it makes very little difference to him whether you speak Greek, Latin, or Arabic. It is not your expression, as a matter of fact, that he hears; he reads your thought and in consequence he understands as well as if you spoke his native tongue. Events confirm this theory. Monsieur Gromier, whom I have quoted above, has several times asked questions in a language unknown to the somnambulist. At first the latter did not understand, but as the will of the hypnotist persisted, he ended by understanding and by replying suitably to the question put to him. But each time that the hypnotist spoke in a tongue of which he himself was ignorant, —that is to say, when he used expressions of which he himself did not know the meaning, —the somnambulist did not answer, because the hypnotist pronounced words to which no idea was attached.

I, for my part, have collected undeniable evidence of this much-disputed comprehension of languages unknown to the subject.

Another form of experimental transmission of thought consists in making a drawing, out of sight of the subject, which the latter must

reproduce without having seen it. There are numerous cases of this. (See, among others, “L ‘Inconnu,” pp. 349—354.)

The phenomenon of thought-transmission is an established fact and unanimously admitted by all the philosophers who have taken the trouble to study it conscientiously and thoroughly, and only obstinate and superficial minds could persist in denying it after so much experience and so many positive proofs.

Telepathy consists essentially in the event of an intense physical impression manifesting itself, generally unexpectedly, in a normal person (that is to say, in one not subject to functional troubles and hallucinations), either while he is awake or during sleep, an impression that is in accord with an event that has taken place at a distance.

Let us note that, in spontaneous telepathy, the person who receives the impression is usually in his normal state; while he who sends it is passing through a state of abnormal crisis, —an accident, agony, fainting, lethargy, death, etc.

The preceding observations prove the action of the human will without the spoken word, and without the intervention of the physical senses.

The action of the spirit upon matter, which has been studied for a long time, is nowhere so evident as in the phenomena produced by autosuggestion upon certain troubles of the blood circulation, such as red-spots, cutaneous congestion, vesication, hemorrhages, bleeding stigmata, etc. That the spirit is different from the body, that it controls it; that mind acts upon matter; that thought, that even the most subtle idea produces material effects; that the mental imagination suffices, under certain conditions, to create organs or to alter them, is rendered so evident by so great a number of varied examples that it is impossible to preserve the least doubt upon this capital point. We may notice, among these examples, the stigmata, with a bloody flow, fixed upon the skin by an idea, by faith, by conviction alone. For example, there is Saint Francis of Assisi, a mystic soul of an extraordinary piety, who renounces the material world, retires into a forest, consecrates himself to prayer, brings together a few pious men to whom he gives, through humility, the name of the Lesser Brothers (Franciscans), goes to preach in Syria, in Egypt, returns to Italy, submits himself to a rigorous fast, to an ascetic life, in

consequence of which he is the dupe of (imaginary) visions in which, among others, there appears to him a seraph with many-colored wings who binds him and imprints upon his body the stigmata of Jesus' crucifixion: his feet and his hands are pierced as if by nails, and his side opens as if it had received a lance-thrust,—stigmata that persist.

There is here fully evidenced a psychic action of the soul upon the body, and this fact is of such importance, from the point of view of the materialistic physiology, that it has been denied, flatly denied. "A religious legend," people have said. ''It is exaggerated, it is not true." As it took place about the year 1220, it has been attributed to the credulity of the Middle Ages. "Who were the witnesses'?" has been asked. Monks, ardent Christians, who accept everything with their eyes shut.

But this example of a canonized saint, to whom more than one miracle is attributed, is not unique of its kind. The researches I have made in connection with this work have furnished me with a great number of others.

The power of the will, of mental force, of the soul, of the idea, of autosuggestion, the manifestation of the action of the spirit upon matter are shown with striking evidence in the physiological phenomena of the stigmata. People have denied these phenomena; they have seen in them only fraud, deceit, credulity. That was an error. These stigmata are actually produced. Holes are formed in the palms of the hands of those suffering from hallucinations, on their feet, in their sides, and these wounds, the counterparts of those of the Crucified, really bleed. These examples are numerous and incontestable, superabundantly verified.

Here are a few of them:

A young girl, born on October 16, 1812, at Kaltom, the Tyrol, near Botzen, Maria Marl, was as much of a mystic as Saint Francis of Assisi. She was much admired in her village and she made her first communion at the age of ten, with so much fervor that she had hardly received the eucharistic bread when, flooded with heavenly light beyond the strength of nature to bear, she fell drooping into the arms of her mother and fainted. Her piety became more ardent from year to

year. She passed her life in prayers, in adoration; she took communion constantly; she took a vow of chastity.

There happens to be at Kaltom a convent of Saint Francis, with sisters of the third order (not cloistered), where she had herself entered under the name of Theresa, in honor of the mystic Saint Theresa. She was eighteen years old, her body suffered, and she was happy to offer her sufferings to God. A privileged victim, she experienced an almost daily ecstasy. She would fling herself on her knees at the foot of her bed and remain there, unconscious, for entire days, her hands clasped, her eyes raised to heaven, ecstatically contemplating the divine Crucified. After the second of February, the date of the Purification, the stigmata appeared on her hands, on her feet, on her side, as was witnessed by her family, by her confessor, by her doctor, by the primate, the Archbishop of Treat, by inquiry in behalf of the Government, and by a number of persons. Blood flowed from the wounds every Friday, when she was present in her mind, with absolute conviction, at the Passion of Jesus Christ.

A similar case of stigmata has been verified, also in the Tyrol, upon Maria Dominica Lazzari, an ecstatic visionary, frequently seized with convulsions, who was born March 16, 1815, at Capriana de Fiemme, near Cavaleri, ten hours from Treat. From the age of nineteen she felt and showed the wounds of the Passion, which she saw with her inner vision. Blood flowed from her hands, her feet, her side, as in the case of the stigmata of Saint Francis, and more, on her forehead, marked with the Crown of Thorns, where it flowed, especially on Friday, with such abundance that her face was entirely bathed in it. (Report of the surgeon, Dr. Dei-Cloche.)

A third “virgin of the Tyrol,” celebrated at the same period, Crescenzia Nicklutsch, born June 15, 1816, at Cana, who lived in Meran, Treat, and Verona, showed the same symptoms. She was ecstatic, like those already mentioned. When she was nineteen years of age the stigmata appeared on her hands on the day of Pentecost, June 7th, a. few days later on her

feet, and finally on her side. From all these wounds there flowed a great quantity of blood, especially on Friday.[6]

As soon as we seek for these examples of autosuggestion, we find a far larger number of them than we should expect. The power of the imagination is shown with especial clearness in the stigmata of Catherine Emmerich. How is it possible not to see in this the idea acting upon matter'?

Despite the doctors of medicine, who could make nothing of it, and despite the doctors of physical and natural science, who authoritatively denied the whole thing, the stigmata of Catherine Emmerich are as certain as the leaves of the elms under which these men argued.

Let us examine this curious subject. I shall extract the following document from a work in three volumes which was sent me in the month of January, 1889, by Madame Sophie Funck-Brentano, a ''niece of the writer of visions, Clement Brentano de la Roche."[7]

Anne Catherine Emmerich was born in the hamlet of Flamske, near the little town of Coesfeld, in Westphalia, September 8, 1774. From her earliest infancy she showed an extraordinary piety.

"One day," she said, "1 was seeking to meditate on the first article of the creed, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty' (I may have been five or six years old). Visions of the creation appeared before my soul. The fall of the angels, the creation of the earth and of paradise, that of Adam and Eve and their disobedience, — everything was shown me. I imagined that every one saw these things as well as the objects which surrounded us."

(Her imagination was precocious!)

[6] Cf. L'Extatique de Kaltern et les stigmatisees, by Abbe Nicolas, of Cagnes, en eye-witness. (Lyons, 1833.)
[7] Visions d'Anne-Catherine Emmerich sur la Vie de Norte Seigneur Jesus-Christ et de la tres sainte Vierge Marie, collected by the R. P. Fr. Joseph-Alvare Duloy (Paris, 1885), 3 vols. See also La douloureuse Passion de Notre-Seigneur Jesus-Christ, d'apres les meditations de la soeur Emmerick, Brentano (Paris, 1835), and the Nouvelle Biographie generale by Hoefer, Vol. XV.

See now what she says about the beginning of her visions.

It was about four years before her entry into the convent and consequently in 1798, in the twenty-fourth year of her age. Kneeling before a crucifix, in the chapter of the Jesuits at Coesfeld, she was praying with all the fervor of which she was capable, plunged in a revery full of sweetness, "When all at once," she said, 'I saw my heavenly bridegroom leave the tabernacle, in the form of a young man, surrounded by splendor. In his left hand he held a crown of flowers, and in his right a crown of thorns, and he offered me the choice between them. I asked for the crown of thorns, which he himself placed on my head, and with my two hands I forced it deep into my forehead. He disappeared, and at once I felt violent pains about my head. Very soon wounds showed like the pricks of thorns, that emitted blood." So that her suffering might remain secret, Anne Catherine drew her cap down over her forehead.

She entered the convent of Dulmen in 1802, and from then on led a life of ecstasy.

One day her heavenly bridegroom appeared to her and made the sign of the cross upon her. Her breast was at once marked with a red double cross, about three thumbs long and about half a thumb wide. On December 20, 1812, she was resting on her couch, motionless, her arms extended like a cross, ravished, in ecstasy, her face on fire. She was contemplating the Passion of the Savior, and her ardent prayer begged the favor of sharing in his sufferings. Suddenly a light descended upon her, in the midst of that she saw Christ crucified, his five wounds resplendent as suns. The heart of Anne Catherine was suspended between grief and joy; at the sight of the sacred stigmata her desire to feel the pain of the Son of God became so violent that it seemed to take on a visible form and to penetrate into the wounds of the Savior. At once, from each one of them, there sprang three rays of reddish-purple, terminating in arrows, which pierced her hands, her feet, and her side. Drops of blood escaped from the wounds that had just been made in her.

From that time on she suffered all the inner and outward pains of Christ in his Passion.

It is impossible to deny the authenticity of these events. Innumerable visitors came from all over Germany and elsewhere to verify them.

As the noise of these occurrences spread abroad, when the French had established their government in her town, the prefect of Munster, accompanied by the lieutenant of police, went to Dulmen, to assure himself of the state of things. They had to admit that these events, physiological or otherwise, baffled all scientific explanation. The prefect sent eight physicians and surgeons from the army to visit the seeress, with the order to make use of all the resources of their art to heal the wounds. But these formed again every Friday.

With these examples we can compare many other similar ones,[8] such as those of Saint Theresa, Saint Catherine of Ricci, Archangela Tardero, Saint Gertrude, Saint Lidwine, Saint Helen of Hungary, Saint Ozanne of Mantua, Saint Ida of Louvain, Saint Christine of Strumbelen, Saint Jeanne of the Cross, Saint Lucy of Marni, Saint Catherine of Siena, Pascthis and Clarisse of Cogis, Catherine of Ranconioso, Veronica Guilani, Colombe Schanolt, Madeleine Lorger, Rose Serra,[9] and also more than one pious man; but as it is not our intention to write a work on this subject, let us limit ourselves to adding to the preceding cases the one that has most caught the attention of contemporary scholars, that of Louise Lateau, the famous stigmatist of Bois-d'llaine, Belgium, studied in 1869 by Professor Delboeuf of the University of Liege.

It was on Friday, April 2, 1868, twelve days after Easter, that Louise Lateau, aged eighteen (she was born January 30, 1850), who had reached the age of puberty only five days before, but who had been ill and languid for more than a year, and who was possessed of an ecstatical, ardent, and mystical imagination, saw her first stigma appear, that on her left side; the following Friday the stigmata appeared on her left foot, and on the third Friday all five were present. The stigmata of the crown of thorns did not bleed until five months later.

[8] Among others , the women who received the stigmata of St. Francis in 1873, and the cases studied in the Annales des Sciences psychiques of 1893, p. 117.
[9] Victoire Claire, of Coux (Ardeche). Of the five bleeding wounds, 1848-80: Annales des Sciences psychiques of 1903.

These events, as we have said, since they are in complete opposition to ordinary physiology which considers thought as a material property of the organism, are forcibly denied by the classical professors. In 1877 the celebrated doctor, Herr Virchow, speaking of the stigmata of Louise Lateau, proclaimed pompously that this baffling mystery was either a fraud or a miracle, eliminating at once the miracle and leaving as possible only the fraud. But as for us, we can affirm in the name of free science, that it was neither a fraud nor a miracle.

I have had the pleasure of counting so many springs that I was a contemporary of the creation of Lourdes in 1858, and heard from witnesses living in the country the amorous story of Madame P and Lieutenant U (graduate of Saint-Cyr, in 1857, then with the 42d of the line at Lourdes, who died as chief of battalion at Tonkin), which gave birth to the incident of the grotto and of the little idiot Bernadette Soubiroux, on the Shrove Thursday of that year, an incident which has had such marvelous results, despite the refusal at first of the honest cure of Lourdes, the Abbe Peyramale (the confessor of Madame P), to admit the appearance of the Virgin.[10] My friend Commandant Mantin, born, as I was, in 1842 (at present at Pau), is still here to affirm it. Let me mention also, among our contemporaries, Captain de G— and Monsieur Pelizza. The “miracles” of Lourdes, at which I as well as thousands of others have been present, are assuredly one of the most curious and obvious manifestations of the power of the idea, of mental exaltation, of faith.

The same is true today of those of Our Lady of la Salette, which have flourished for twenty years, despite the findings of the civil tribunal of Grenoble, April 15, 1855, proving that this Virgin which appeared to two children on September 19, 1846, was Mademoiselle de la Merliere, who was deliberately playing this comedy. The water of la Salette also affected cures, as I have seen with my own eyes, in the diocese .of Langres, in 1854.

[10] An apparition so suspicious in all its details, as well as in its principle. Astounding words: “I am the Immaculate Conception. . . .Go and bathe and eat grass.” And this attitude: the Virgin Mary, holding a chaplet in her hand, “I salute you, Mary, full of grace!” And her request, “Do me the kindness to come here in fifteen days!” And this other, “I desire to see people.” And so on. The story of Lourdes had, as its origin, the sudden appearance of a beautiful woman in the grotto, which struck the imagination of the stupefied child and gave him in hallucinations which followed the conviction of having seen the Holy Virgin. Such seems to be the most probable explanation of this event.

These various miracles, produced by autosuggestion, have been observed from antiquity as well as in our days, among pagans as well as among Christians. We can also see, in the museum at Dijon, the votive offerings sent by the Romans to the goddess Sequana, at the source of the Seine. They were found in a temple that had been raised to this divinity, in a valley that I have just visited recently, not far from the village of Saint-Seine. Dr. de Sermyn relates, on his part, that they discovered, not very long ago, among the excavations carried on by Monsieur Cawadias in the ruins of the temple of AEsculapius, pedestals bearing commemorative inscriptions of the principal miraculous cures that were produced at that time. These pedestals represent the sacred archives; they date from the third to the fourth century before Christ. It appears from them that at this period, and contrary to what is generally supposed, the priests in the service of AEsculapius, in the sanctuary, did not prescribe any remedy. It was the god that cured. The sick saw him per. form very daring operations on their bodies. The persons who were cured declared that they had seen the divinity come and open their abdomens, take away their tumors, and feel among their entrails.

Thus, for example, a man who had cancer of the stomach, tells how lie came to Epidaurus, fell asleep, and had a “It seemed that the god ordered his servitors, who accompanied him, to seize him and hold him tightly while he his stomach. The man, frightened, fled, but the caught and bound him. Then AEsculapius opened his stomach, cut out the cancer, and, after having carefully sewed everything up again, released the man from his bonds. Immediately after, the man awoke and found himself cured.”

We see that always and everywhere it is the vision that operates on the body of the invalid as a surgeon of today would do.

All the sick who go to Lourdes wish to be cured and in consequence have the image of the cure in their brains; but few of them are actually cured, because not all are endowed with the suitable nervous system to see their desires take shape and act as a supernatural being endowed with marvelous powers would act.

The ardor of religious conviction is a Proteus that changes its form and becomes Apollo, AEsculapius, Jesus, the devil, the Virgin Mary, —a good

or an evil spirit according to the convictions, the preconceived ideas of the conscious self.

I will add that perhaps it is not autosuggestion alone that is concerned; wandering psychic forces make their influence felt at times.

Let us continue the study of the will.

That the will can act at a distance, without speech, without any material telegraphic or telephonic communication, by the very force of this will, can henceforth no longer be denied. We can appear to others. Is it the soul that moves and is transported? Is it an action upon the brain producing a real hallucination? We are confronted with this question and our duty is to examine it frankly, with no preconceived ideas. We shall solve it by means of experiment through these examples.

Among other instructive observations, I shall bring to the attention of my readers the following occurrence that was related by Mrs. Russell, of Balgaum, India, the wife of the inspector of public instruction in the district of Bombay. This very remarkable experience is as follows:[11]

I was living in Scotland; my mother and sisters were in Germany. I was living with a very dear friend and every year I went to Germany to see my people. It happened that for two years I was not able to see my family, according to my custom. All at once I decided to leave, but my family knew nothing of my intention. I had never been to see them in the early spring and I had not time to warn them by letter. I did not want to send a telegram for fear of frightening my mother. The thought came to me to wish with all my strength to appear to one of my sisters, in such a way as to apprise them of my arrival. I thought of her with all the intensity possible, I wished with all my might to be seen by one of them. I believe I did not concentrate my thought for more than ten minutes. I left by the Leith steamship one Saturday evening, toward the end of April, 1559.

I desired to appear to them toward six o'clock in the evening of this same Saturday.

[11] See Hallucinations telepathiques, example IX, p. 48.

I reached the house at about six o'clock on the morning of the following Tuesday. I entered without being seen, for the door was open, and made my way into the room. One of my sisters was sitting with her back turned to the door; she turned about when she heard me and on seeing me stared at me, turned pale as death, and dropped what she held in her hand. I had said nothing until now. Then I spoke: "It's I," I said. "Why are you so frightened?" At that she answered: "I thought I was seeing you as Stinchen [another of my sisters] saw you Saturday."

In answer to my questions she told me that on Saturday evening, toward six o'clock, my sister had distinctly seen me enter through a door into the room where she was, open the door of another room where my mother was, and shut the door behind me. She had dashed after what she believed to be me, calling me by my name, and was absolutely stupefied when she did not see me with my mother. My mother could not understand my sister's excitement. They looked for me everywhere, but naturally could not find me.

The sister who had seen me—that is to say, who had seen my apparition—had gone out on the morning of my arrival. I sat down on the steps to see how she would feel when she saw me, myself, on her return. As a matter of fact, when she lifted her eyes and saw~ me, seated on the stairway, she called my name and almost fainted. My sister has never seen anything supernatural, either before or since, and I have never repeated these experiments. Nor shall I ever do so, for the sister who was the first to see me when I actually came to the house fell seriously ill from the shock.

J. M. Russell.

We shall return to this subject in treating of the doubles of living people. Let us state only, at this moment, that the inquiry made by the English Society of Psychical Research, and the reputation of the author as well as that of her family, who confirm what she says, do not permit us to doubt the authenticity of the tale. It proves, as do the others, that the will acts at a distance.

The questions that we have just asked arc equally pertinent to the following case, which is vouched for by the Rev. W. E. Dutton, of Leeds, England.[12]

Toward the middle of June, in 1863, I was walking in the main street of Huddersfield, in broad daylight, when I saw approaching me at a distance of several yards, a very dear friend, who I had reason to believe was seriously ill at his home in Staffordshire. I had learned of his illness a few days before from his friends.

As the figure came toward me, it was easy to examine it, and while I commented to myself on his rapid recovery, I never suspected that it was really not my friend. At the moment of our meeting the figure looked at me with a sad and penetrating expression and, to my great astonishment, neither seemed to notice that I was offering him my hand nor answered my affectionate greeting, hut tranquilly continued on his way. I was transfixed with astonishment and for several seconds incapable of speaking or walking. I have never been quite certain that he made any sound; but nevertheless, this very clear impression remained in my mind: "I had so much need of you and you would not come."

When I had recovered from my astonishment, I turned to look once more after the retreating figure, but everything had disappeared. My first impulse was to telegraph, then the idea came to me, and was at once put into execution, to go and see if my friend were really alive or dead, though, for that matter, I felt almost certain that the latter hypothesis was the correct one. When I arrived the following day I found him alive hut only half-conscious. He had often asked for me, his mind was apparently fixed in the idea that I would not come to see him.

As far as I could discover, he must have been asleep at the hour when I saw him appear the day before. He told me later that he imagined he had seen me, without knowing exactly how or where. I cannot explain how my friend appeared to me dressed and not as he must have been at that very moment. My mind at the time was absorbed with other

[12] Hallucinations telepathiques, LXXXIX, p. 266.

matters and I was not thinking of him. I may add that he lived several months longer.

W. E. Dutton.

When the author was questioned as to whether or not he had ever had other hallucinations, he declared that he had had but this one.

All these cases of magnetism, of hypnotism, of mental transmission, of autosuggestion, of doubles of the living, which we have merely touched upon here in order to affirm the principle of their reality, and to which we shall return later, establish, beyond any possible doubt, the action of the spirit upon the physical organism, and lead us to conclude that the soul exists independently of the body.

Let us continue our experimental study.

But before going further I wish to answer an objection to the scientific method that arises quite naturally in the critical mind. It may be supposed that these coincidences I have not the value we are attributing to them, as for every one observed, a thousand dreams, a thousand presentiments have no consequence whatever. This would be a valid objection if it were not a question here of special sensations, of precise facts, of circumstantial details, of unforeseen accidents, at times of scenes as clear to the sight as if they had been photographed. It cannot be applied, for example, to the presentiment of Madame Constans, quoted on page 68, refusing, in spite of her doctor, to take a dose of medicine that would have poisoned her; or to those very personal cases of Delaunay and of Mademoiselle Houssaye, drowned in the sea (page 70); or to the dramatic death of Madame Arboussoff (page 72), etc. Our conviction concerning psychic transmissions is, on the other hand, gradually strengthened by the facts themselves, which are so absolutely characteristic.

Chapter 6. Telepathy And Psychic Transmissions At A Distance

Not words! Facts!

If the intervention of the will, without any word or sign, is a manifestation of the personal existence of the soul, telepathy and mental communications at a distance furnish more evidence that is no less demonstrable of this truth.

Cases of instantaneous and unexpected perception of accidents, of sickness, of death, from a distance of thousands of miles, occur in such numbers that to-day they form a normal part of the usual material of psychological studies. Denied and misunderstood for centuries, they form, from now on, an almost classic chapter.

My readers arc familiar with them and I do not wish to repeat what I have already published on this subject.[1] I will limit myself to recalling on principle this important mental phenomenon of telepathy, because it proves the existence of the soul, and to simply putting before their eyes a few new and characteristic events.

In a chapter in "L'Jnconnu," on "The Vision, in Dreams, of Actual Events, at a Distance," I believe I have given irrefutable proofs by authentic and remarkable examples, notably the experience of Pierre Conil, the writer, who saw and heard his dying uncle; the vision of his brother's bloody head, as seen by the captain of a vessel returning to Marseilles; the sight of a ship carrying his father and mother, by the engineer Palmero; the sight of a young girl falling from a window, by Monsieur Martin Halle; the sight and description of a cancer operated upon by Dr. Cloquet, etc.; on the whole, forty-six proofs of the telepathic transmissions of sight at a distance, or in the interior of the body, upon which we do not need to dwell here; with this conclusion: Vision from a distance, in dreams or in a state of somnambulism, can no longer be denied. We have read there, among others, of the well-known case of the

[1] In L'Inconnu et les problemes psychiques, Les Forces natuelles inconnues, Lumen, Uranie, Stelle, Le Fin du Monde, etc

Princess de Conti who in a dream saw that a remote wing of her palace in which her children were sleeping was going to fall and rushed to save them.

We shall have occasion to observe other events that will confirm this statement more and, more.

Here is one of them, exceedingly curious, and of a most intimate nature, between a person awake and a person asleep, which was sent to me in August, 1904, by Monsieur A. d'Argy, Commissioner of the Marine, in retreat at La Rochelle, who begged me not to reveal the names.

Madame S— of La Rochelle was living in 1887, in the Vendee, with her family. At the time she was engaged to Monsieur T—. There was an intense reciprocal affection, and an active correspondence.

One night, toward eleven o'clock Madame S— awoke, hearing herself called despairingly by her given name. She recognized the voice instantly and felt a breath on her face. Mechanically she put out a hand to see what it was, thinking that some one was actually there.

She felt nothing, she saw nothing. Very much frightened, she called her mother, who was sleeping in another room, and told her about her disturbing hallucination. She had at the same time an intense feeling of some misfortune that had just come to pass far down in the Basse-Pyrenees. She wrote the next morning to her fiancé, but received no reply. The letters that followed met with the same fate. Several months passed without any news. Then Madame S— learned, by chance, that her friend had been taken to prison that very night, on very grave charges, to avoid creating a scandal in a little town. A doctor who accompanied the unfortunate man testified that, overwhelmed and seeing all his chances for happiness disappear, he called upon his fiancée in a despairing voice.

Their relations were broken forever. Monsieur T—, who married later into another family, died three or four years ago.

This tale is scrupulously exact.

Argy.

(Letter 1068.)

This case of communication between the living recalls other cases that have been as carefully observed, among them that of a woman (Madame Wilmot) who set out to see her husband on a ship, and did indeed arrive there (see "L'Inconnu," page 489), and hundreds of telepathic transmissions of the same order.

There are innumerable cases of many sorts of similar communications between living beings at a considerable distance. Among those that have been sent me by careful observers I shall cite especially the following, which I owe to my fellow-member of the scientific press, Mr. Warrington Dawson, at present in the American Embassy at Paris, who in 1901 was directing an American agency for the great newspapers of Paris. Here is a letter from him, dated December 3, 1901 (18 rue Feydeau, Paris):

DEAR MASTER:

It is my duty to acquaint you with a very curious ease of telepathy which has just happened to me and which may help to advance your very important and clear-sighted investigations.

On Tuesday, the eighth of last October, I was occupied in my office, at 18 rue Feydeau, in writing an article on your young colleague, Mademoiselle Klumpke[2] (an astronomer at the Observatoire), when I stopped for lack of notes on an interview that she had been kind enough to give me. Remembering that these notes were in a drawer of my worktable in my apartment, 36 rue de Varennes, I returned to get them. I climbed up to my floor—the fourth above the entresol—leaving my hat on a table in the entrance hall, as I always did. Then I noticed that the apartment was deserted, although my housekeeper was supposed to remain there during my absence. I made a gesture of annoyance, saying, "This must stop!" then, remembering that my mother was to return to Paris before long and that she could arrange these matters better than I, I shrugged my shoulders while I crossed the

[2] Who had since married the English astronomer Isaac Roberts

narrow little hail to enter my workroom. Here I sat down at my table that was laden with papers and on which stood a lamp. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon of the eighth, and I am certain of the date, for the same evening I sent to Americas the article on Mademoiselle Klumpke, of which I am sending you a copy, bearing the date of October eighth.

You can read in this article, that she owes her initiation into astronomy to you, and that you were, through your books, her first master.

What was my astonishment to receive through the mail from America, the following week, a letter from my mother, telling me all the incidents that I have just told you, as they had been seen by one of our friends, Mrs. George Coffin of New York.

My mother's letter bore the date of October eleventh, in New York, and the envelop was postmarked with that date; the letter was therefore mailed three days after the event and, as it takes at least eight days for a letter to go from Paris to New York, there was no possible way to learn of these happenings in less than three days except by cable, and certainly no one would dream of sending such unimportant details, especially at the rate of one franc, twenty-five centimes a word. My mother wrote on October eleventh, Friday, and said that she had seen Mrs. Coffin the preceding Tuesday, which was therefore the, ninth. It is a curious fact that while trying to see me at two o'clock in the afternoon, New York time, Mrs. Coffin had seen not what I was doing at that moment but what I had done the afternoon before at two o'clock, Paris time.

You will see from the letter that Mrs. Coffin began by describing the apartment. As it had never been photographed, and Mrs. Coffin had seen my mother for the first time since her return from Europe only a few minutes before describing this interior, she could not have known of the arrangement of our apartment.

This could be explained by suggestion, as my mother knew of it, but my mother, who is used to Paris ways, would never think of calling a floor placed four flights above the entresol anything but the fourth floor, while to a New Yorker, who is not used to the entresol, and who calls the ground floor the first floor, it would be the sixth floor, as Mrs. Coffin

says. It seems, therefore, from this fact alone, that Mrs. Coffin has really seen the apartment. Moreover, for almost a year, that is the only time that I have happened to return home at that hour of the day. Mrs. Coffin's astonishment at seeing the porcelain stove, an object unknown in America, shows her usual exactness in this vision at a distance.

During the long years that my family has known Mrs. Coffin we have often amused ourselves by asking her to "see" what was happening to people who interested us or to answer questions which we wrote on bits of paper, closed and sealed, and which she held without looking at them. Her replies have always been clear and, when we were able to verify them, exact.

Very sincerely, etc.

Francis Warrington Dawson.

(Letter 1003.)

This letter was accompanied by that of Mr. Dawson 's mother, dated New York, October 11th, describing exactly, as dictated by Mrs. Coffin, the apartment in Paris, "on the sixth floor," Mr. Dawson 's visit to this apartment, his annoyance over the servant's absence, his hat placed on a table, the search for his papers, the condition of his bureau, his sitting down to write, — in a word, all the details of what he had done in Paris.

This very exact sight at a distance is absolutely spontaneous and incontestable. But what is more singular yet is that this vision went back to the day before, and not to the day and moment itself, so that it expresses a sort of double phenomenon of telepathy in time and space.

Telepathic transmissions between living people are not so rare as one who is ignorant of them would suppose. The following is worthy of attention:

Commander T. W. Aylesbury, living at Sutton, in the country of Surrey, England, wrote in December, 1882:

At the age of thirteen, I fell overboard from a ship that was approaching the isle of Bali, to the west of Java, and I was almost drowned. After having sunk several times, when I came up to the surface of the water I called my mother, at which the boat's crew was very much amused; and they teased me many times about it, sparing no sarcasm. Several months later, on my return to England, I told the whole story to my mother and said at once:

"While I was under the water I saw you all sitting in this room; you were working on something white. I saw you all—Mother, Emily, Eliza, and Ellen."

His mother confirmed his statement. "I heard you call me," she said, "and I sent Emily to look out at the window."

The time, considering the difference in longitude, corresponded to the hour at which the voice had been heard.

Another letter from the commander completes the story:

I saw their faces, — the faces of my mother and my sisters, — the room and the furniture, above all the old-fashioned Venetian blinds. My eldest sister was seated by my mother's side.

As regards the time of the accident, it was very early in the morning. I remember a ship had capsized the day before and bad been tossed up on the shore. The officer gave us the order to go and find it and to bring it back in the morning, but I cannot remember the exact hour. The situation was terrible and the waves broke furiously. We almost turned upside down; I had never thought myself so near my end, and yet I have been in many a tight place. But that accident made such an impression upon my mind that I couldn't forget a single detail, nor the jokes of the sailors: "Boy, why are you calling your mother'? Do you think she can pull you out of the devil's claws'?" and other remarks that I cannot repeat.

The inquiry elicited a letter from the commander's sister. She wrote:

I recall the incident perfectly. It made such an impression upon me that I shall never forget it. We were seated and working peacefully, one evening, when first we heard a feeble cry of "Mother!" We raised our eyes and said: "Did you hear some one cry 'Mother'?" The words had hardly left our lips when the voice called again, "Mother!" twice in succession. The last cry was stamped with terror, it was like a cry of agony. We all rose and my mother said, "Go to the door and see what it is." I ran into the street and searched for several minutes, but everything was silent and I saw no one; the evening was fine, without a breath of air. Mother was very much upset by this experience.[3]

These cases of transmission of thought between living people have nothing in common with normal life and are outside the action of our physical senses. From all the evidence, it is the spirit that acts here.

It would be easy to cite many other examples, notably that of a young amazon who, having leaned over too far, to open a barrier, fell from her horse and gave a cry that was heard by five persons seven kilometers away.[4]

I have received ferocious letters from well-meaning ladies, evidently inspired by their spiritual directors, reproaching me for not believing in the Christian dogmas and for admitting the truth of the "ridiculous tales of telepathy, of sensations at a distance, and the announcements of death," and I have, at this moment, noted one of them especially, sent by a lady of Salins, which is almost insulting and which reached me in the same post that brought me the following (Letters 913 and 914 of my collection), which contradict and singularly complement each other.

Letter 913 declares that everything about telepathy is false, that it is inexcusable of me to take these accounts seriously. "It has been impossible for me to continue reading your book 'L'Inconnu,' it is so ridiculous; it is truly grotesque! "Letter 914 says:

[3] Hallucinations telepathiques, p. 365.
[4] Hallucinations telepathiques, p. 363

For the inquiry which you have undertaken I have made it my duty to bring a personal contribution to that most important work of yours, "L'Inconnu et les problemes psychiques," a basis for the science of the future.

In the winter of 1878 I was living at Aurillac. I had left my wife and daughter at San Servan, Ille-et-Vilaine.

On December 22d, while I was in a cafe, at about half-past eight, I was seized with intolerable anguish. My suffering was so great that I went out and returned home, where I wrote my wife a letter that began as follows:

"Sunday, December 22, 9 o'clock.

"I was in the cafe, with my usual companions, when I suddenly rose and left, although they begged me to remain. I had heard an irresistible call. You must have been thinking of me, earnestly calling me, perhaps with anguish. Is it pain? Is it danger? Oh, tell me what you wanted of me at that hour! I came home in great distress, all upset. There was a pressing call: I needed to be alone to write you and confide my sorrow to you."

The rest of the letter does not concern us.

On receiving this letter on the morning of the twenty-fourth, my wife was astounded. She wrote at the head of my letter, "The day of the baby's accident."

This is what had happened at Saint Servan:

At eight o'clock in the evening of the twenty-second, my daughter, aged six weeks, was put to bed with a hot-water bottle at her feet. Her mother went to bed shortly after. A few minutes later the infant gave cries of distress, and they discovered that the hot-water bottle had leaked and the child, its feet scalded, was twisting in convulsions of pain.

My wife was distracted, and did not regain possession of herself until after the doctor came, which was certainly more than an hour later.

The coincidence of these events and their perfect agreement can be established, thanks to the dating of my letter, — December 22d, nine o'clock.

I had dined, as was my custom, from seven to eight, at the cafe; I had taken a hand at cards: the time required to take me to the cafe, about 159 meters from my apartment, that necessary to settle myself for writing, everything shows that I heard the call at about half-past eight at the earliest.

The child had been put to bed at eight o'clock, and the scalding water could not have had an effect later than half-past eight, for otherwise the water, having cooled, would not have instantly caused the blister it did. My wife no longer remembers if, in her distraction, her thoughts actually turned to me or if she called me. She is convinced she did, but her actual recollections have been destroyed.

Such as it is, this experience, so clearly proved by my letter of December 22d, seems to me literally exact.

I will add that the nature of my mind, and that of my occupation, lead me toward the study of scientific realities much more than toward events of the mysterious order of the psychic world. I have never had any other experience of this nature.

GIGON.

Sous-Intendent of the First Class.

Does not this curious tale show the greatest similarity to that of Monsieur Arboussoff (Chapter IV, page 71) and that of Monsieur Garrison (ibid, page 75)? All reveal the powers of the supra-normal soul. Let us continue.

Here are some more cases concerning which it is impossible to doubt, showing telepathic transmission of thought. I am taking them from a letter that was sent me from Passavant, Haute-Saone, by Dr. Poirson of the faculty of Paris.

I am sending you accounts of three events of a somewhat different order, but which may be useful to you in your studies on psychic phenomena. I can guarantee their authenticity, as I have the habit of attributing no importance to events of this order unless I have observed them myself.

A About two months ago, happening to be in Belfort, a quarter of Paris, I began to think suddenly and with singular insistence of one of my colleagues of the Jura, of whom I do not think once a year, as I have no relations with him except in a professional way. Moreover, these relations date from thirteen years ago, and I have not seen him since. A few minutes later I found myself face to face with him in a square, and as he had come on a bicycle, down a street, at right angles to my own, it was impossible that I should have seen him from a distance. That is a fact: I do not explain it, but it struck me.

B As I am a doctor by profession, I am often disturbed at night. A great many people pass before my door: but if some one comes who is going to ring, I awake of my own accord while he is still twenty meters from my house; I know beforehand that he is going to ring.

I have verified this not once but a hundred times in the past twelve years. In order to be entirely exact, I must say that if I am not asleep—which often happens—I am entirely incapable of foretelling if a passer-by is going to stop or not; I must say also, that if I am sleeping very heavily, after an especially fatiguing day, the phenomenon does not occur.

C I have among my patients a hysterical young woman in whom I can induce hypnotic sleep and suggestion with extra ordinary ease. It has often happened that I have fixed the hour of her awakening and of her rising, which she observes with remarkable exactness. This does not seem at all extraordinary to one who practices a little hypnotism, but here is something else: One day this person's husband, who was impatiently awaiting his wife's awakening, was seized with the whim of setting forward the hands of the watch that was placed, as usual, on the table by the bed. As it was only half-past six in the morning and he had half an hour to wait, he turned the hands forward to half-past seven. He was surprised to see his wife rise quickly at the very moment when the large hand touched the hour of seven. This man came himself to

inform me of what had happened. I was incredulous and wished to verify it, and in fact, I have verified it several times.

I must say that this person, when asleep, with her eyes closed, easily reads the time from my watch, even if I vary it, but only if I myself am looking at the hands. In the same way, she easily names any object that I grasp behind her, but only when I take it in my hands.

All this represents facts to be explained. I leave you the task of interpreting them; they could be confirmed for you by those concerned if they were not, in mentality, a little behind the point of view held by us; they consider me somewhat of a sorcerer, and would certainly not wish to be mixed up with these stories.

You can make any use you please of my letter. I authorize you to publish my name, for I am not afraid of the laughter of the ignorant, and I enjoy that of imbeciles.

I am, etc.,

Dr. Poirson,

Passavant, Haute-Saone; October 9, 1916.

(Letter 3482.)

The first of these three eases is not unusual, and it is one of those that lead us to consider the transmission of thought from brain to brain, like a wave of ether. The second leads to the same conclusion. The third shows a suggestion operating despite a trick. The transmission of thought is evident, especially in the case of the doctor who altered the hands of the watch. Everybody knows that we often meet, apparently by chance, a person of whom we are thinking. We find examples of it everywhere. Dr. Foissac, among others, points out[5] some of these coincidences which have particularly struck him. But they are not rare, although they have not been analyzed until now. They prove psychic radiation.

Cases of telepathic sight and hearing are more frequently met with.

[5] La Chance ou la Destinee, p. 589.

Among the numerous observations which have been sent to me, I will quote the following case in which Madame Barthes, the widow of Dr. Barthes, of Jvry, actually saw from a distance an accident which fortunately had no serious consequences. The event took place in 1874 in Rumania.

February 12, 1917.

The doctor had left on horseback to make his rounds, and his wife had gone to pass the afternoon with some friends. Suddenly, while they were talking, she saw her husband fall from his horse into the road, and she gave a cry of fright. They laughed at her, quite naturally, but when the doctor returned in the evening, his wife, still under her impression of the vision and to the great astonishment of the rider, asked if he had hurt himself. He told her that having slowed his horse to a walk, after a rather stiff climb, he had passed the bridle over his arm in order to roll a cigarette, when the animal suddenly stumbled, fell on its knees, and flung the rider to the ground, where he had hurt his face, his shoulder, and his arm. The doctor, who was acquainted with telepathy, was not surprised at this Vision.

(Letter 4075.)

Our next ease of mental vision is of the same order. Lombroso published the following letter, sent him by his colleague in the university, Professor De Sanctis:

I was once at Rome with my family, which had remained in the country. As the house had been robbed the year before, my brother was in the habit of sleeping there. One evening he told me he was going to the Costanzi Theater. I had come in alone and was begin-fling to read when I was suddenly seized with terror. I struggled against it and was beginning to undress, but I remained obsessed by the thought that the theater was on fire and my brother in danger. I put the light out; but, growing more and more disturbed, I lit it again, contrary to my usual

custom, and decided to await my brother's return before I went to sleep. I was truly frightened, just as a child might he. At half-past twelve I heard the door open, and what was my astonishment when my brother told me about the panic that had been caused by the outbreak of a fire, which had coincided with the hour of my anxiety.

A very remarkable case of the transmission of thought is this, which was reported by Dr. Quintard to the Society of Medicine at Angers:

A child of seven, Ludovico, possessed a gift for solving problems similar to that of the celebrated Inaudi.[6] The child's father finally noticed one day, first, that he hardly listened to the reading of the problems that were given him, and, secondly, that his mother's presence was the one condition necessary for the success of the experiment.

She always had to have the required solution under her eyes or in her mind. From this he deduced that his son did not calculate but divined, or, to be more exact, that the mother transmitted her thought to him; and he resolved to make sure of the matter. Consequently, he asked her to open the dictionary and ask the boy which page she was looking at, and the boy answered at once: "It is page four fifty-six," which was correct. Ten times he repeated this and ten times we obtained the same result.

When a sentence of any length was written on a tablet it was enough for it to pass under the mother's eyes for the child, when questioned, even by a stranger, to be able to repeat the whole of it.

All these observations unite in proving to us that communication exists between mind and mind.

A case of vision and also of exact hearing from a distance, in a dream, has been reported to me by one of my correspondents, Monsieur Maurice Rollinet, who had it from Monsieur Doutaz, the cure at

[6] I have published it in the Annales des Sciences psychiques of October, 1910

Domdidier, canton of Fribourg, Switzerland. Here it is, somewhat abridged:

It was in the middle of November of the year 1859. At the time I was eighteen years old. I went to bed and to sleep.

I do not know how long Morpheus had rocked me in his arms, when a strange vision appeared before my mind. I saw the sorrowful face of my dear old father, speaking to me from my old home, which was twenty-four kilometers from the town near Fribourg where I was living: "My dear Joseph," he said, "it is with great sorrow that I am writing to tell you that your poor siste4 Josephine, is dying in Paris."

I was awakened by this vision but said to myself at once: "Ah! bah! it is a dream !" At that I went to sleep again.

But behold, the same vision appeared again, exactly as at first, with the same sorrowful look and the same words: "My dear Joseph," etc., "hut your mother does not yet know the sad news."

"This time," I said, jumping out of bed, "I no longer believe it's a dream," and under the painful impression of a sorrowful reality, I dressed and looked at my watch: it was half-past twelve.

When day had come I set out for the college. As I had some material to get from my room, I went up to the house, which was left in the care of an old concierge. 1 had barely entered when I saw the good old man coming toward me, holding a small package in his hand. He said to me: "A gentleman who has just arrived from your home has asked me to give you without delay this present sent by your father, for it is of the utmost importance." I opened the package at once. It was accompanied by a letter from my father, written in great haste; I read: "Dear Joseph, it is with great sorrow that I am writing to tell you that your poor sister Josephine is dying in Paris. But your mother does not yet know the sad news. The telegram reached me at about ten o'clock this evening. I did not think I ought to tell your mother, for the moment. It is now eleven o'clock. At half-past twelve our deputy will leave for the Grand Council. I will put this in the package that your dear mother prepared for this occasion. Try to arrive here without fail to-morrow evening. It is

impossible for me, at my age, to fulfill this sorrowful duty. You, alas! will represent us."

This account is accompanied by the following certificate, signed by the narrator.

The undersigned declares, on his conscience, that the account is perfectly exact and that his memory of this event is as clear as if it had taken place yesterday.

Jos. Doutaz, Cure, Domdidier, April 18, 1918.

It is utterly impossible here to plead a chance coincidence between this dream and the event, and we are forced to admit that the father's thought was carried to the son, with the very text of the letter that he was sending to him.[7]

We see that everything unites to prove the value of the thesis upheld here: The action of the soul is independent of the body.

The following instance of telepathic sensation has been described by Dr. Foissac ("Chance ou la Destinee," page 599) as having been experienced by himself. At the time the importance of these events was never suspected:

When I was a medical student and intern at Dupuytren, I dreamed that I saw my father attacked with an illness that was bringing him to the grave. I awoke in great distress, which I tried to overcome, telling myself that I had left my father the Sunday before in perfect health; it was now Wednesday. I told myself that it was really a weakness to grow anxious over a dream, and I resolved to pay no attention to it. But the image of my dying father was continually before my mind and, although I was ashamed of my weakness, in order to escape from this obsession I left for Saint-Germain, where I found my father ill of inflammation of the lungs, which carried him off in five days.

[7] Compare with a similar communication between my father and mother (L'InconnuI, p.513).

Telepathy appears under all forms. It is not rare for the daily papers to receive echoes of observations of this sort. “The Daily Telegraph” of August 23, 1906, published, among others, the tale of one of its correspondents. His little daughter, aged three, was saying her prayers and refused, that evening, to follow her usual custom and pray for a happy ending to the voyage of her grandmother, who had left Russia for England. “No,” she repeated, “I shall not pray this evening that Grandmother will arrive safely, because she has arrived..” — ‘What did you say?”

— “Yes, I saw the boat in the harbor and she is very well.” The correspondent added that she had made a note of the date, and that when she received word from her mother, she learned that that lady had really arrived, as this child had seen in her dream the day before she had refused to make her usual prayer. She observes that this power of seeing things at a distance, in dreams, is in her family, and that she herself saw one night the explosion on board of the Great Eastern. Her husband made considerable fun of the dream when she told him, but he was obliged to acknowledge the truth of it the next morning when the papers arrived.

A telepathic vision, in a dream, from Strasburg to Paris has been described to me by an old friend, Madame Dobelmann, in the following words:

I do not know, dear Master, whether or not I have mentioned to you an instance of telepathy that I experienced in January, 1901. We were already living in Paris when, at the end of January, we were called to Strasburg, my husband and I, for the funeral of my poor invalid mother. Our son was not able to go also, because of the laws of exception of that place. I was much affected, as can be imagined, by the swarm of memories and by the weather (the air was full of whirling snow), so that I had very agitated dreams at night. One night, especially, I was overcome with sharp distress and dreamed that I saw my youngest son caught between two rows of planks that had fallen on him, unable to free himself and calling me, “Mama!” I spoke of it to my sister, while I was still very much oppressed by this nightmare. But neither she nor I dreamed of attaching any importance to it. A few days

later, on our return to Paris, the servant who received us said: "Monsieur Julien is much better, he is at his work."— "What, has he been ill?" —"Why, yes, he had to stay in the house several days, for he hurt his leg. Didn't he write you?"

On my son's return we questioned him, and he told me that he had had an accident, for a pile of boards had fallen on him; but it had been nothing serious, and it would have been useless to frighten us. "But I knew it," I said. "I dreamed about it all one night; and the curious thing is that the place did not at all resemble your wood yard. You were in the midst of planks, unable to get up, in a great unfamiliar yard, and the sun was shining brightly."— "That 's correct," replied my son; "the sun was shining on that day and it did not happen in my place but in a neighbor's yard, which is just as you have described it without having ever seen it. But I have no recollection of having called you."

Had my son called me at night in his sleep? It is not impossible, for he was accustomed to dream out loud.

I must add that this is the one and only time that such a thing has happened to me.

Valerie Dobelmann,

12 rue Linne, Paris.

(Letter 2320.)

We see what variety exists among all these sincere, simple, and authentic tales. They reinforce one another and prove to us that our body does not contain all the reality that exists.

Here is another example of the vision at a distance, in a dream, of a very precise incident.

One of my relatives, Madame Izouard—of Marseilles, where her family has been well known for more than half a century—told me of a very curious dream which I begged her to describe in a few lines. She has done so in the following letter.

December 13, 1901.

Dear Master:

I was living at Marseilles when this event took place at Sorgues, a small town in the department of Vaucluse. I saw in a dream one of my friends in the hands of a man who was cutting off her beautiful hair, and I awake very much astonished.

A few months later I learned that the lady whom I had seen undergo this disagreeable operation had been through a severe illness, and they had had not merely to cut her hair, but to shave the entire head. My dream had occurred at the same moment, which is why I have kept an unforgettable memory of it.

V. Izouard.

(Letter 1201.)

Distance does not exist for the spirit. We have brought up the question in order to learn whether the souls of the seers are transported to the places seen, or whether the person seen acts at a distance upon the seer, or whether there is not a simultaneous sensation on both sides. But what is space to thought?

The sight of an accident, an illness, a death at a distance is not so rare a thing as might be imagined. We shall have occasion farther on to examine a large number of exact and precise cases of the vision of death. Let us describe, in connection with telepathy, the following striking observation. I have taken it from a book by Mrs. Crowe, “The Obscure Sides of Nature.”

A certain Mrs. H—, living in Limerick, had a few years ago a servant named Nelly Hanlon, whom she esteemed very much. Nelly was a most responsible person, who rarely asked for a holiday, and Mrs. H— was all the more disposed to grant her request when she asked for a day off in order to attend a fair a few miles away. But Mr. H—, learning on his return of Nelly's plans, said they could not do without her, as he had

invited guests to dinner on that day, and Nelly was the only one to whom he could trust the keys of the cellar. He added that business matters would probably not permit him to return in time to go after the wine himself. Mrs. H—, who did not wish to disappoint Nelly, to whom she had given her consent, said that she herself would take charge of the wine for that day, and Nelly set off in the morning, overjoyed, promising to return in the evening if it was possible and at latest on the following morning.

The day passed without incident; no one thought of Nelly. When it was time to go after the wine, Mrs. H— took the key and went toward the cellar staircase, followed by a servant who carried the basket for the bottles. She had hardly begun to descend the steps when she gave a great cry and fell in a faint. They carried her to her bed, and the girl who accompanied her told the other terrified servants that they had seen Nelly Hanlon at the foot of the staircase, dripping with water. When Mr. H— arrived they told him the same tale: he scolded the servant for her foolishness, and Mrs. H—, who had been well cared for, regained her senses. As she opened her eyes, she sighed deeply and exclaimed. "Oh, Nelly Hanlon!" and as soon as she had recovered enough to speak, she confirmed what the servant had said: she had seen Nelly Hanlon at the foot of the stairway, dripping as if she had just come out of the water. Mr. H— did everything in the world to convince her that it was an illusion, but in vain. "Nelly," he said, "will soon return and will laugh at you."

Night came, then the morning, but no Nelly. Two or three days passed. They made inquiries and found that she had been seen at the fair, and that she had left, toward evening, to return home. From this moment all trace of her disappeared. Finally her body was found in the river, but they never knew how the tragedy had occurred.

It is reasonable to suppose that the servant, as she was drowning, — without doubt accidentally, — went back in her mind to her master, to whom she was very much attached. This telepathic view is especially remarkable for its precision and clearness.

These mental visions at a distance sometimes take on a symbolic form that is not at first understood. I have received the following letter about a dream that occurred at Berry, 240 kilometers from Paris:

During the night of August 20th—30th I was particularly moved by a dream. We had a young friend who had been married for five years to a government official. The young couple were living at Neuilly, and their second child, then about fifteen months old, was in a very disturbing state of health because of intestinal trouble, so that hardly a ray of hope remained to the parents.

My imagination was therefore rather concerned with this little creature, who, as a matter of fact, and thanks to great care, did survive and is now a delightful little boy.

This being disposed of, here is my dream:

I was in the room of my young friend; she was standing, clad in a dressing-gown, her hair almost down her back, her eyes flowing with tears, her whole personality showing the most profound distress. Meanwhile she held mechanically, and as if from habit, a child whose head and thin little body drooped languidly over her shoulder. This child, the image of suffering, was alive and uttering feeble, plaintive moans. Soon my attention was attracted by two men, bearing a bulky object that they placed in the middle of the room. At first this object appeared to me to be a child's coffin and I was disturbed to think that after all the sick child was still living and in his mother's arms. After a period that I could not determine, it seemed to me that the funereal coffin grew slowly larger, until it became capable of holding a large body. In fact, the two men soon placed in it a long corpse, wrapped in a white sheet.

The young wife redoubled her tears and wracking sobs, and with her free hand pushed back those with her who tried vainly to lead her away from this melancholy sight. She refused fiercely to go: children, family, nothing existed any more for her but the beloved dead person, whom they were about to carry away and whom, she said, nothing in the world could replace.

Like many dreams, mine ended in confusion, and on my awakening there remained with me only a painful impression, with the very clear recollection, however, of the details of the principal scene, and I told my servant, while I helped her arrange the room, that something had certainly happened to our friends, whom she knew well. I thought that the third child, whom they were expecting, would arrive in the world before its time.

The morning of the next day, September 1, my husband entered my room holding in his hand a mourning letter and, very much agitated, still hoping that it was all a mistake, he stammered rather than read an invitation to the funeral services of our friend, aged thirty-six years, who had died August 30, 1892.

The unfortunate man had succumbed to an attack of cholera, a victim in his full youth and happiness to the terrible scourge which, during the summer of 1892, as you can remember, touched a few of the townships to the west of Paris.

During the few short hours in which they despaired of saving the sick man, his young wife (and I knew that such had been her longing) had thought of the doctor-friend my husband was to them, as one who, she believed, could have found means to save him.

Who will explain this mysterious sympathy? The truth is that, with my mind, I had actually seen our friend put into his coffin, and that everything had happened as I have described it. The very evening of August 30th, as he had died between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, the body had been placed in the coffin, as a sanitary measure, and that at a rather late hour in the evening.

A. FERON,

Dun-sur-Auron, Cher.: June 6, 1899.

(Letter 671.)

How is it possible for us not to be convinced by all these experiments, at once diverse, positive, and harmonious?

Apropos of vision at a distance, I have received from a correspondent (Monsieur Egisto del Panto, of Sesto Fiorentino, Italy) no less curious a note than the following:

On taking, one day, the train from Toulouse to Paris, I observed in my compartment a middle-aged gentleman of very distinguished appearance, with whom I soon fell into conversation. We discussed philosophy, socialism, religion, and he let me understand that he was very religious and that he had become so through a frightful misfortune which had befallen him some time before.

He told me that it was the first time he had talked to a stranger of this terrible unhappiness that had come to him. All his family, if I remember rightly, had been swept away by a flood at Toulouse. Well, this gentleman, who seemed to me a professor, told me that several days after this catastrophe, he had seen in a dream the spot where the body of one of his drowned children lay under the water, and that when he went the next day to look for it, it was found in exactly that spot. It is impossible to admit that this honest middle-aged man of superior intelligence and education, with tears in his eyes, should have told me a false story.

(Letter 1013.)

Here is a very remarkable example of vision at a distance, in a dream, of a most unusual accident. I take it from the work "Phantasms of the Living," Volume I, page 338, and from its French translation, "Les hallucinations telepathiques," page 107. Canon Warburton of Winchester wrote under date of July 16, 1883:

I had left Oxford to pass a day or two with my brother, Acton Warburton, at that time a barrister. When I reached his home I found a message from him on the table: he excused himself for being absent and told me that he had gone to a ball in some part of the West End and that he intended to return a little after one o'clock. Instead of going to bed I

sat and dozed in an armchair. At exactly one o'clock I awoke with a start, crying out, "By Jupiter! he has fallen!" I saw my brother, who came out of a drawing-room on to a brilliantly lighted landing, catch his foot on the first step of the stairway and fall head first, breaking the fall with his elbows and hands. I had never seen the house and I did not know where it was. Thinking very little of the accident, I went to sleep again. A half-hour later I was waked up by the abrupt entrance of my brother, who exclaimed: "Ah, there. you are! I nearly broke my neck. As I was leaving the ball-room I caught my foot and fell full length down the stairway."

Such is the canon's tale; he declares, at the same time, that he has never had hallucinations.

It seems to me that this is not, properly speaking, a telepathic message from the brother of the narrator (although he may have thought of him suddenly with intensity), but rather a case of mental vision, caused by this telepathic excitement, especially as the Reverend Canon Warburton adds later that he saw a landing brilliantly lighted and a clock and tables arranged for refreshments, which corresponded to the actual fact.

I have published a case very much resembling this (also a fall down a staircase) in "L'Inconnu" (Volume XXXI, page 479) and another of the same sort (Volume XLVI, page 432).

We shall especially study this curious fact of mental vision in the following chapter. It will prove with even more positive evidence than the preceding chapters the existence of transcendent powers of the soul.

These sights at a distance, these telepathic impressions, can be observed equally well outside of dreams, or at least in half-waking conditions. Let us read, for example, the following observation of the barrister Richard Searle, sent to the Society for Psychical Research on November 2, 1883:

One afternoon I was sitting in my office in the Temple writing out a memorandum. My office is placed between one of the windows and the chimney; the window has a view of the Temple. Suddenly I noticed that

I was looking through the lower pane, which was about at the level of my eyes, and I saw the head and face of my wife. She had fallen backward, her eyes closed, her face livid, as if she were dead. I shook myself, tried to get control of myself; then I got up and looked out through the window: I saw only the houses opposite. I came to the conclusion that I had grown drowsy and then fallen asleep. After having taken a few turns about the room to rouse myself thoroughly I went on with my work and thought no more of the incident.

I returned home at my usual hour. That evening, while I was dining with my wife, she told me that she had lunched with a friend living in Gloucester Gardens, and that she had taken a little girl with her (one of our nieces, who was staying with us), but that during lunch or immediately afterward the child had fallen and cut her face so that the blood had spurted out. My wife added that she herself had fainted. What I had seen through the window came back to my mind, and I asked her at what hour it had happened. She answered, at a few minutes after two. It was at the very moment of my vision. I must add that it is the only time my wife has fainted. At the time I told the event to many of my friends.

Richard Searle.

In confirmation of this incident Mr. Paul Pierard, of 27 Gloucester Gardens, London, writes:

Some ladies and children had met at my house one afternoon. Mrs. Searle, of Home Lodge, Herne Hill, had come with her little niece Louise. As they were playing a noisy game and running a good deal about a table, little Louise fell from her chair and hurt herself slightly. The fear that the accident was serious so upset Mrs. Searle that she fainted. The next day we met Mr. Searle, who told us that the afternoon before, while he was looking over some business in his office, 6 Pump Court, the Temple, he had felt a curious impression and had seen the image of his unconscious wife as clearly as in a mirror. This vision had come at the moment of the accident. The fact is undeniable.

It certainly seems that there was here an instantaneous communication between the two minds, those of the husband and those of the wife.

Mental vision, through telepathy, of events taking place at a distance of ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred, or two hundred miles, or even more, is not doubted by those who have studied this subject.

Here is an example related in February, 1901, in the proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research, and which the investigators of this subject have seen many times since.[8] This is a case of very exact vision at a distance of 230 kilometers. The writer, Mr. David Fraser Harris of the University of Saint Andrew's, tells of it himself in the following words:

A few years ago, an urgent matter of business prevented me from returning to London at the end of the week. As I did not care to spend Sunday in Manchester, I went on Saturday afternoon to Matloch Bath, resolved to spend my Sunday quietly and to return home by a morning train on Monday.

When I reached my destination, a little family hotel near the station, I asked at once for tea, and went into the drawing-room to warm myself, as it was a very cold day in January, with quantities of snow, and the thermometer marked a respectable number of degrees below zero.

I found that, at the time, I was the only guest in the hotel, and while I waited for my tea I settled myself comfortably in a big armchair before a cheerful fire. It was not yet dark enough to light the gas, nor light enough to read. I turned my bock on the window and thought of nothing in particular. I was in a state of passive tranquility, when all at once I lost the sense of where I was. Instead of the wall and the pictures that were hung on it, I saw before me the front of my house in London; my wife was standing on the doorstep and speaking to a workman who held a big broom in his hands.

My wife seemed much distressed, and I felt an instant certainty that the man was in a wretched condition of poverty. I did not hear their

[8] Sage, La zone frontiere; Chevreuil, On ne meurt pas, p. 45.

conversation, but something told me that the unfortunate man was asking my wife to help him. At this moment the servant brought the tea and the vision vanished. The impression made on me by this vision was so profound, I was so convinced that I had seen something real, that after I had finished my tea I wrote my wife to tell her what had just happened to me and to beg her to find out about this man and to help him as much as possible.

Now, this is what had taken place in London. A young boy had come and knocked at the door of our house. He had spoken to the servant and had offered for a penny to sweep the snow that covered the sidewalk and the house doorstep. While the boy was talking, a poor devil in tatters came up, who said: "I beg you to give me the preference. This child will probably spend for candy the penny you give him, while I need it to buy bread. I have a wife and four children, all ill; there is nothing to eat, no fire," etc. The servant begged the man to wait while she went to tell my wife, who came to speak to the unfortunate fellow. He repeated that he had been ill, that all his family was in the most wretched poverty, but that before appealing to public charity he wished to try to find some sort of work. It was this scene that I had beheld at the very moment when it came to pass. It had been transmitted to me, probably through the impression that the misery of this poor man had made on my wife's mind.

Here is the end of the story. My wife promised the man that she would go to his home in the evening and see what she could do. She found he had told the truth. My wife gave what she could in food, clothes, money, and fuel. It is useless to add that my letter that reached her Monday morning caused her the greatest surprise. A few days later I saw the man myself; he was exactly the one I had seen in my vision. Later he found a position as milkman and has distributed milk in our quarter for at least two years.

David Fraser Harris.

Is there not in this actual observation an absolute proof of a power of the soul that has nothing in common with the material eye, the retina, the

optic nerve, or the brain? Was it not the spirit that alone acted here? Was it not psychic transmission at a distance? For the observer not only saw the scene but even perceived the nature of the conversation between his wife and the beggar.

Psychic, mental communications between living people often take on an auditory form, as we have already noticed. One hears a voice, an urgent call, and this voice, this call corresponds to a desire, an intention, a plan, a sort of far-away order, which it is wise to obey. Here is a remarkable case, experienced by Dr. Nicolas, Count Gonemys, of Corfu.[9]

In 1869 I was a doctor, with the rank of major, in the Greek Army. By order of the minister of war I was attached to the garrison of the Isle of Zante. As I approached the island where I was to occupy my new post (I was about two hours from the coast) I heard an inner voice say unceasingly to me in Italian, "Go and see Volterra." This phrase was repeated so often that I was stunned; although I was in good health at the time, I was alarmed by it, because I believed it an auditory hallucination. There was nothing to make me think of Monsieur Volterra, who lived in Zante and whom I did not even know, although I had seen him once ten years before. I tried to stop my ears, to talk with my fellow-travelers, to no avail: the voice continued to make itself heard in the same manner. Finally we made land. I went straight to the hotel and occupied myself with unpacking my trunks, but the voice did not cease to torment me. A little later a servant entered and told me that a gentleman was at the door and wished to speak with me at once. "Who is it?" I asked. —"Monsieur Volterra," was the answer. He entered all in tears, full of despair, and begged me to follow him, to see his son, who was very ill.

I found the young man in a delirium of madness, naked, in an empty chamber, having been given up by all the doctors of Zante five years before. His aspect was hideous and rendered more frightful by continual paroxysms, accompanied with whistling, howling, baying, and other animal cries. Sometimes he twisted himself on his stomach like a serpent; at other times he fell on his knees in a state of ecstasy; at

[9] Hallucinations telepathiques, p. 306.

times he talked and quarreled with imaginary beings. The violent periods were sometimes followed by prolonged and complete syncope. When I opened the door of his room he flung himself upon me with fury, but I remained motionless and seized him by the arm while I looked at him fixedly. At the end of several seconds his glance lost its fierceness, he began to tremble and fell to the floor, his eyes shut. I made some magnetic passes over him, and in less than half an hour he was in a hypnotic sleep. The treatment lasted two and a half months, during which I observed in him more than one interesting phenomenon. Since his cure, the patient has never had a relapse.

A letter from Monsieur Volterra to Count Gonemys, dated Zante, June 6, 1885, contains a complete affirmation of what has just been told concerning the Volterra family. The letter concludes as follows:

Before your arrival in Zante, I had no relations with you, although I had passed many years at Corfu as deputy of the legislative assembly. We had never spoken, and you had never said a word to my son. We had never thought of you or asked your help until I came to see you when you arrived at Zante as an army doctor, and begged you to save my son.

We owe his life first to you, then to hypnotism. I think it my duty to assure you of my sincere gratitude, and to sign myself.

Your very affectionate and grateful

Demetrio Volterra, Count Crissoplevri.

Additional signatures:

Laura Volterra [wife of Monsieur Volterra].

Dionisio D. Volterra, Count Crissoplevri.

Anastasio Volterra, [the recovered invalid].

C. Vassapoulis, Witness.

Lorenzo Mercati, Witness.

Demetrio, Count Guerino, Witness.

Another case of hearing at a distance:

Dr. Balme of Nancy was caring for the Countess of L—, who was suffering from dyspepsia. She came to him for consultation and he never went to her house, which was situated outside of the town. Three days after one of her visits, on May 19, 1899, when he crossed his antechamber after returning home, he heard these words: "How ill I feel, and no one to help me!" Then he heard the sound of a falling body. The voice was that of Madame de L—. When he tried to verify his impression, he found that no one in the whole house had seen or heard this lady. He retired to his workroom, collected his thoughts and, having placed himself in a light state of hypnosis, he transported himself to the lady's presence. He saw all her actions and gestures and noted them minutely.

Madame de L— came to see him and told him her impressions, which agreed on all points with those of the doctor. "After you had retired to your chamber," he asked her, "what was it you seemed to be searching for about you?"— "It seemed to me that some one was looking at me," she answered.

This case, which is worthy of having been watched by an experienced observer, led Monsieur Primot to the following reflections:

It certainly seems to have been a telepathic call that came from the invalid, — an appeal which was explained by her distress, and which was translated by the recipient into the form of an auditory impression exercised upon his sub-consciousness. Dr. Balme replied to this by placing himself, through an effort of autosuggestion, in a state of hypnosis sufficient to make possible the exteriorization of his psychic center of perception, and by that very means his telepathic excursion to his patient's home. This interpretation is confirmed by her declaration

that she had felt his presence. “It seemed to me,” she said, “that some one was looking at me.” In other words, there was on one side transmission of thought or sensation — that is to say, telepathic action, from the invalid to the doctor — and on the other side, in response to the transmitted thought, exteriorization by the doctor, in a state of semi-somnambulism, and the transference to the neighborhood of the patient of his psychic center of perception, — that is to say, telepathic action.

Is this word “transfer” exact and does it represent the actual conditions of the phenomenon? Perhaps the psychic organism has no need to be transferred from one point to another in order to see and feel effectively despite distance. But events took place as if he had really transferred himself and that is all that we can affirm with certainty. At bottom it makes little difference, for in whatever manner one interprets them they are nonetheless a striking and living proof of the extraordinary faculties and powers that belong to the psychic organism.[10]

Such hearing at a distance as we are now about to consider is inadmissible if one is not willing to recognize that the mind, the soul, our psychic entity (whatever may be the word we use) acts outside the body and the limits of the senses.

The author of the account, Mr. Rod Fryer (“Hallucinations telepathiques,” page 293), writes:

January, 1883. A strange event took place in the autumn of the year 1879. One of my brothers was away from home, when one afternoon, at about half-past five, I was astonished to hear myself called distinctly by my name. I recognized the voice of my brother so clearly that I ran all over the house to find him; but as I did not find him, and knowing that he was forty miles from there, I ended by believing it an illusion, and thought no more of it. When my brother arrived, six days later, he told me that he had just escaped a very serious accident. As he was getting off the train his foot had slipped and he had fallen his entire length on the platform. “What is very curious,” he said, “is that when I felt myself falling I called you.” This fact did not strike me at the moment, but

[10] Primot, Psychologic d’une conversion, p. 448.

when I asked him at what hour it had happened he named an hour that exactly corresponded with that in which I had heard him.

When he was questioned, Mr. John E. E. Fryer, the victim of the accident, wrote as follows:

Newbridge Road, November 16, 1885. I was making a trip in 1879 and had to stop at Gloucester. As I got off the train I fell, and an employee of the railroad helped me to rise. He asked me if I had hurt myself and if any one was traveling with me. I answered, no, to both questions and asked him why he was so much interested. He answered: "Because you called out the name 'Rod.'"

When I reached home I related the incident, and my brother asked me the hour and the day. He then told me that he had heard me call him at that moment. He was so sure that it was my voice that he had searched carefully over the house.

The coincidence is so striking that its corollary follows with certainty. This voice crossed space as if through a telephone.

These are all just so many incontestable phenomena of telepathy, of psychic transmission, which show transcendent powers of the soul quite different from those of which we have learned through physiological psychology—sight and hearing at a distance by means of psychic waves.

I do not wish to repeat here what I have already said about the transmission of thoughts. The fact of mind-reading has been proved many times by serious experiments. Here is one more case reported by Dr. G. de Messimy, and observed by him in a patient in a state of somnambulism:

My subject's lucidity went so far as even to read the thoughts of those present. . . . Having placed twelve members of the society before the subject . . . we asked each one of them to think freely of a chosen flower,

without telling its name to any one. . . Then turning toward the subject, we asked him to name out loud the flower each of these persons had thought about, and he named them all, without the least hesitation and without making a single mistake, as if he were reading from a hook of human thought.

That is one experience from among a hundred of the same sort.[11]

The transmission of thought is as certain as the transmission of heat, light, electricity, and solar magnetism.

The telepathic vision is produced without the help of the eyes. Distance and material obstacles do not obstruct it.

It is as indifferent to time as it is to space. One sees a present, past, or future event. This psychological fact makes use of the power of the spirit, independent of its organism.

If, in opposition to the deduction affirmed here that these presentiments, these telepathic sensations prove the existence of the soul independently of the body, one put forward the hypothesis that these normal faculties may belong to the brain and not to a mental principle, and that they no more prove the individuality of the soul than does the dog's sense of -smell or the instinct of the carrier-pigeon, we should answer that an attentive analysis of the facts brings every free mind to a contrary conclusion, for it concerns the exercise of the thought and not of the physical organism. We are here entirely in an invisible psychic world. Whether one at -tributes these perceptions to the "unconscious,'' to the "subconscious," or to the "subliminal," etc., the name matters little. What we feel here is a spiritual entity in action; it is the soul.

It is not the retina nor the optic nerve, nor their connections with the brain that are employed. All the imaginable functions of any brain substance whatever cannot read the mind of another, nor perceive an event which is taking place at the antipodes, nor a scene which has not yet come to pass.

[11] See, among others, Dr. Dupouy, Sciences occultes et physiologie psychigue (Paris, 1898), p. 125

Are these transmissions carried out through ether'? If they can be compared to light, as phenomena of the vibratory order, they nevertheless differ from it because light diminishes according to the square of the distance, while thought appears to be transmitted integrally, with the same intensity. Does an appropriate milieu serve for the transmission?

The modern theory of ether waves has been proved, but has the old Newtonian theory of the emissions themselves been really disproved? Do not certain emissions manifest themselves'? Is not the repelling action of the sun in its favor? Has not the aurora borealis a solar emission as its origin'? Do not the ions and electrons traverse space?

We are going to examine, in the following chapter, irrefutable proofs of mental vision, outside of telepathic transmissions; but it is very difficult to decide, in many cases, whether telepathy, the correspondence of thought, is entirely foreign to this vision at a distance. Here, also, among a hundred other cases, is a vision of death at a time when this seemed most unlikely.

The author of the following letter tells how he saw, in a dream, the death of his father:

Les Moutiers: October, 1911.

For two years I have intended to write you about the following event, which resembles in many points those that you relate in your works. I shall be obliged to you if you do not publish my name.

In January 1909, I was a notary at Saint-Martin-des-Noyers, Vendee, and I had just been negotiating for the practice at Moutiers-les-Mauxfaits, where my parents were living, of which I have since become the incumbent.

On January 9, 1909, I had come to Moutiers to spend a few hours with my parents, whom I left in good health. A few days afterward my mother sent me word of herself and my father. They were both well. On the night of January 30th-31st, I dreamed that I arrived at my parents' home. In the drawing-room I saw a crowd of people leaning over an

improvised bed and I saw my father stretched out on a mattress which had been placed on boards.

I began to weep, which awoke my wife, who was sleeping by my side. She, in turn, woke me and asked what was the matter with me. I answered: "It is nothing, I have just had a senseless dream; I dreamed that Papa was dead."

We fell asleep again without anxiety, after having noticed that it was half-past five in the morning.

The next day I learned that my father had been taken ill at eleven o'clock the evening before and had died at half past five, at the precise moment when I had had this nightmare: they had laid him out on a bed like that which I had seen in my dream, and in the drawing-room, as the apparition had shown me.

What role did telepathy play in this vision at a distance? Our mass of documentary evidence is really too rich. The tree of the new science has a quantity of branches, each one of which demands a special study.

Here is another case of vision at a distance, remarkably precise for a child of seven, which was sent to Professor Richet by Dr. Jean, a major in the medical service during the late war.[12] He wrote:

About ten years ago I had under treatment, in my village, at Cogolis, Var, a young patient about seven years old. One morning I was urgently summoned to see the little invalid. The frightened mother told me that the child had had a sudden paroxysm of delirium. He had awakened, as usual, and all seemed to be going well, when at about ten o'clock he rose up in his bed, terrified by a sudden hallucination. He saw water everywhere and began to cry for help, for his father was drowning, he said. His father was away from home. He had gone to Nice, where his brother lived, and was to spend several days there. When I arrived the child was calm, but insisted that he had seen his father drown.

[12] Annales des Sciences psychiques, 1919, p. 20.

A telegram from the brother soon urgently called the widow (for such she really was) to Nice, where she learned that her husband had been drowned at about ten in the morning, in trying to save his brother, who had been seized with a cramp while swimming in the ocean. His last words had been, "our poor children."

One more occurrence. A teacher in the department of the Var, who asked me not to print his name, wrote me:

One morning, on awaking, one of my relatives said to his wife, who was lying beside him: "I must get up at once, I have just seen that some thieves have entered our fields. They are eating and drinking. I'm going after them."

"But you are mad," said his wife. "How are you able to see all that from here? Lie down."

"No, no! I saw it."

He persisted, took his gun, ran into his field, and brought back as prisoners to the town hall two tramps that had broken their way in.

F., at S., Var, January 23, 1912.

(Letter 2217.)

What part does the transmission of thought play here? Without doubt, the thieves must have been thinking about the proprietor and must also have thought about not being caught. on the other hand, it may have been a case of vision at a distance, without telepathic action, and we could have included it in the following chapter. All the cases in this collection of evidence are closely related. We usually imagine that all observations of telepathic communication date from our own epoch. This is an error. Thus, for example, we can read in a work printed in 1752 ("Dissertations," by Langlet-Dufresnoy, Volume II, Part 2, page 88) this sentence: "In dreams objects appear to us in far-away places, through the affinity of the spirit with the external air. Persons a hundred leagues

away have known of the death of their friends at the moment of their decease.”

We can see from this that facts recorded by Petrarch and other observers were already accepted by certain philosophers of the eighteenth century, just as we accept them today. We do not admit their interpretations. our own are doubtless worth a little more. But let us not deceive ourselves too much in regard to their intrinsic value.

We imagine also that such strange instances are rare, most rare, doubtful, and uncertain. That also is an error. My conversations, during half a century, have shown me that at least one person in ten knows, either for himself or from those near to him, of a case of telepathy, of premonition, of a warning of death, a sight of the future, in a word of psychic action; but in general—I do not know why—they conceal them, they veil them as one would something that cannot be admitted. This is all the result of a false education and imaginary fears. Telepathy has more foundation, a more universal and solid base than has any religion. The facts on which has been founded the Christian religion, with its different sects (Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy, etc.), or those that are at the basis of Judaism, of Islam, of Buddhism, and the other religions that divide humanity, have been less established, less carefully observed, less completely demonstrated, than the psychic facts which we are studying in this work. It is therefore easily understood how certain minds, anxious to reach the truth, should have placed their hopes in the positive studies we are pursuing here, as others have placed theirs in religion.

One word more.

In the same way that the spectral analysis of light permits us to discover through the light-waves the chemical constitution of bodies lodged in the atmosphere of the stars, millions of millions of miles from our eyes, it is not impossible that an analysis of psychic radiations should permit us to enter one day into communication with the life and thoughts of beings inhabiting these distant regions.

The fact of the communication of thought by mental suggestion at very great distances, which is verified today, indicates the possibility of a sort

of radiation of the human consciousness, from one star to another, by means of specially subtle waves.

Chapter 7. Vision Without Eyes – The Spirit's Vision, Exclusive Of Telepathic Transmissions

Events are of most use when they contradict rather than when they support the established theories.

Sir Humphry Davy.

IF events that cannot be disputed, proving the action of the will without the intervention of speech or of any external sign, as well as the transmission of thought at a distance, show -that there is in us a mental being, thinking, willing, and carrying its action beyond the boundaries of our organic senses, the no less certain proofs of mental vision are going to bring us the same evidence, independent of these events but confirming and completing them.

This special subject is in itself so rich and so backed by evidence that when I was studying it, a few years ago, I was led to consecrate to it a whole volume that is not yet published. I shall select here a few significant documents, exclusive of those concerning the telepathic transmissions that we have just examined, which, nevertheless, can at times be linked to them. We have here, for our study, a curious category of special events.

This is surely one of the unknown faculties of the soul that it is most interesting to examine. Certain beings are endowed with it, in their normal state, when they are not dreaming or in a state of natural or artificial somnambulism, but it is especially under the conditions of sleep that we can observe these phenomena.

This vision at a distance, whether it be direct, or through reading the thought of the brain, seems to me evidence of the existence in us of a lucid, immaterial, distinctly personal element. To pretend that brain matter secretes thought is sufficiently audacious; but to assert that the brain sends out thought to seek that of other men, to comment on it and to understand it, is even more extravagant. It is to confound the effect

with the cause, for here again the thought shows itself as cause and not as effect. Its personal activity is evident.

If there is an assemblage of words qualified to make a man of science roar with indignation, it is assuredly this: “Vision without eyes, " but with the forehead, the ear, the stomach, the tips of the fingers, the feet, the knees, by the inner vision, through opaque bodies, or at the distance of many kilometers. What an untenable assertion and what a paradox! The forehead, the stomach, the hands, the feet, the knees are not organs of vision: vision does not operate through them; it is the mind that sees.

The biologist who knows the marvelous optic apparatus of the eye, so excellently adapted to the reception of images, cannot admit that these images can be perceived without this suitable mechanism, this masterpiece of ancient organic evolution, from the rudimentary eye of the trilobites of the primordial geological ages up to man.

For my own part, I was unwilling for a great many years to undertake any examination whatever of this question, despite all that was affirmed by my friends the psychologists, and of what I myself had come across in the works on hypnotism. An astronomer is the last person who would be disposed to undertake the study of such a problem, and I could not help thinking of the somnambulists of the country fairs as well as of all the tricks of the pretended readers of thoughts, whose drawing-room exhibitions amuse us.

Nevertheless, after my investigation of 1899 into psychic phenomena, I was led to publish, in the eighth chapter of my work “L ‘Inconnu,” forty-nine examples worthy of belief of vision in dreams, from a distance, and I chose the part of studying freely, and without any preconceived ideas, this most important subject. In this book I was able to make the following statement: “It is possible to see without eyes, hear without ears, not from hypersensitiveness of the sense of sight or hearing, for these records prove the contrary, but by an inner, psychic sense, a mental sense.”

Vision from a distance and “second sight” are irrefutable evidence of this transcendent faculty belonging to the soul and not to the molecular, chemical, and mechanical agency of the brain.

If we open the dictionaries we shall find nothing opposite the words second sight, double sight, clairvoyance but the most complete skepticism with entire ignorance of their phenomena.

The events that we are about to examine confirm the premises that I published twenty years ago. The objections that we have all brought forward, attributing these phenomena to mistakes, illusion, trickery, pretense, fraud, juggling, and anything else one can imagine, disappear in smoke and from now on let the truth shine forth in all its brilliancy.

The same thing is true of perception by the sense of touch, which is admissible only in certain special cases.

The thesis that I maintain here is of the utmost importance from the philosophic point of view, for it results in the suppression of the false principle of Aristotle, of Locke, of Condillae, and of the Sensationist School. “Nil est in intellectu quim prius fuerit in sensu, ” or, in other words, “Everything that exists in our consciousness comes to us through our senses.” But if it is possible to see without eyes, the seeing is done by inner psychic faculties, by an unknown force, independent of sense and normal vision. In this way the understanding receives impressions that have not reached us through the senses.

We shall prove that several eases of sight at a distance or hidden things are not due to the reading of the thought the brain of another; however, in these cases also, reading is again mental vision. I am not very fond of and it seems to me that too many new words being created in the psychic sciences, which are still so rudimentary; but as we are speaking here of the sight of things that are hidden from our eyes, the word cryptoscopy seems to be pointed out to indicate this sort of study (χρυπτοξ,hidden, σκοπειυ, see).

The first actual observation of this curious psychological subject, which caught my attention long ago, is the circumstantial account given by the famous encyclopedia of Diderot and d’Alembert after the word Somnambulism.

This account is guaranteed by a witness whom we are almost surprised to find here, the Archbishop of Bordeaux. Here is the very tale of the encyclopedist:

This prelate told me that when he was in the seminary he had known a young priest who was a somnambulist. As he was curious to understand the nature of this malady, he went every evening to his chamber as soon as he knew the priest was asleep, and observed what happened. Well, this priest arose, took some paper, and composed and wrote sermons.

When he had finished a page, he read it over aloud, from one end to the other (if we call "reading" this action which was done without the eyes); and if something displeased him, he cut it out and wrote the correction in above, with much good sense.

I had seen the beginning of one of these sermons, that for Christmas. It appeared to me well done and correctly written; but there was one surprising correction. Having put in one place "this divine infant," he thought, on reading it over, that he had better put the word "adorable" instead of "divine." In order to do this he erased the last word and placed the first exactly above it; afterward, he saw the word ce [this] could not go with adorable; therefore he very cleverly added a t to the preceding letters, so that one read cet adorable enfant [this adorable child].

The eye-witness of these facts, in order to assure himself that the somnambulist made no use of his eyes, thrust a cardboard under his chin in such a way as to shut off the. sight of the paper on the table: the somnambulist continued to write without noticing it.

I am quoting this account, which is already old, especially in order to recall to the attention of my readers the innumerable instances that have since been attested, of sight at a distance, independent of the visual organ, by subjects in a state of hypnotic sleep, either natural or induced. It dates from the year 1778, and I read it in 1856 (in Diderot's own part of the country).

These examples of sight in the darkness, by somnambulists or the hypnotized, are not so much rare as completely ignored. Many persons know about them. For my part, I had occasion to meet, — in 1866, at the

Chateau of Clefmont, in the Haute-Marne,—a young girl of twenty years who, without knowing anything about it, often got up during the night and continued in complete darkness some work begun during the day, either dressmaking or embroidery. We may compare this visual power to that possessed by cats, by bats, by owls, by screech-owls, but in their case it would not be mental vision. These animals have a peculiar retina, and several of them are blind during the day. We can also ask ourselves, as the intercepting screen intercepts nothing, if this vision does not penetrate through opaque bodies as the eye of photography does with the help of the X-ray. That would be a rather daring hypothesis. We shall see that it does not apply to the following experiences.

Let us remain for the moment in the eighteenth century.

Science is indeed slow in its advance.

In 1785, at the time of Mesmer, the Marquis of Puysegur made some curious and painstaking experiments in artificial somnambulism, produced by hypnotism. Let us recall one among them.

He had hypnotized a young lad, fourteen years old, named Ame. Here is what he wrote concerning him:

In replying to my question as to where the seat of his trouble was he told me that a year before he had strained himself, carrying some stones against his stomach, and that for six months a humor had been gathering which caused him continuous pain.

“Do you believe you will recover soon?” I asked him.

“Yes, Monsieur,” he answered, taking my hand. “Day after tomorrow, at half-past four in the afternoon, I shall be cured.” The result of this information was that I had to hypnotize him only twice, —that is to say, the next day at half-past ten, and a second time the day after.

He had severe pain in his head. Questioned as to whence came the pain, he answered, “From the stomach.”—”Is there communication between the stomach and the brain ^“—“Yes.”—”What is it!”

—"It is a tube."—"What route does it take!" For his only answer he indicated the path of the great left sympathetic nerve. When asked what he saw his pain with, he answered, "With the tips of the fingers." — "So you have to touch yourself to know about our pain!" — "Yes."

The next day the young man gave certain information about the "distinct magnetic properties of the different fingers of the hand." We do not need to examine this question here. But let us listen to Puysegur:

What this boy told me about the varying powers of the fingers to produce more or less of an effect upon an invalid, struck me particularly. Monsieur Mesmer had told us the same thing, and certainly this young boy could not have had the least idea of it. If this phenomenon actually occurs, we shall know of it with certainty only because of the agreements in the reports of the somnambulists.

As for the vision of the somnambulists, it differs a great deal. Little Ame, for example, said he needed his fingers to see, or rather to feel where his trouble was. He is the only one who has told me of this peculiarity; all the rest can understand themselves very well without this means and make free use of the word "see" instead of the words "know" or "feel" such or such a thing. We must remember, however, that these are peasants speaking. When I have happened to put educated, or partly educated, persons into a state of hypnotic sleep, I have always heard them complain of the poverty of the language to express their sensations, and make use of the expression "to know," "to be quite sure" of what they were telling me, without being able to find words expressive enough for their ideas.

Whatever may be the sort of sensation which the most simple class of men designate by the expression "see," when in a state of somnambulism, I believe that the phenomena of our vision when in a natural state can give us only a slight idea of it. Our vision is nothing but a sensation that we procure from external objects. It is by the path of the nerves that all our sensations come to us; and of all our nerves only that

which we call the optic can, by its construction, procure for us the sensation of sight. All external objects, nonetheless, present themselves equally to the other nerves; but unless there is immediate contact, they produce no effect whatever. If, therefore, in the state of somnambulism, things happen differently; if the somnambulist, although his eyes are tightly closed, walks, avoids the objects with which he meets, reads, writes, and, in short, does all he can and even more than he can in his natural state, he certainly must be able to see, — not by the optic nerve, as it is concealed, but by means of other nerves which have become so sensitive that they bring to his soul a sensation absolutely similar to that of vision. How does this vision operate! What are the nerves that procure it in this singular state! This I do not venture to determine; but quite certainly the phenomenon exists, as without it the somnambulists would not see.

But I do not believe that any one will be able to deny them this faculty.[1]

So speaks the Marquis of Puysegur, friend of Mesmer. We shall see later that this identification of sight with touch will be taken up by other experimenters, apparently without their suspecting the existence of these early accounts. As for me, I shall not discuss any explanatory hypothesis at present, and I shall be satisfied to say with Newton, “Hypotheses non jingo.” Let us first examine the facts themselves, — these facts still so much debated today.

These observations have continued during the hundred and thirty-four years that separate us from the previous era. A great number are without interest, only partially verified, full of illusions and errors; but others have undeniable value. They prove that there exist processes of understanding different from the normal processes.

My readers are already familiar with examples of this sort, in my book “L ‘Inconnu” Some of them are so characteristic that I cannot help giving a brief account of them here.

We can see (page 496, XLIII) the undeniable anatomical observation of an operation, the removal of the breast, performed by Dr. Cloquet upon Madame Plantin, who, in a hypnotic state, felt absolutely no pain, and

[1] Puysegur, Memoires pour servir a l’histoire et a l’establissement du Magnetisme animal (Paris, 1786 and 1809), p. 95-107

talked tranquilly with the operator, while her daughter, Madame Lagandee, also in a hypnotic state, saw the interior of her mother's body. The mother died the next morning and the autopsy proved, down to the least details, the exactitude of this mental vision.

"Do you think," asked the doctor, "that we can keep your mother alive for long!" — "No, she will die early tomorrow morning, without pain and without suffering."' — "What are the affected parts?" — "The right hung has shrunk up; it is surrounded by a membrane like glue; it swims in a quantity of water. But it is especially there," said the somnambulist, pointing to the lower corner of the shoulder "that my mother suffers. The right lung no longer breathes; it is dead. The left lung is sound; that is how my mother lives. There is a little water in the envelop of the heart [the pericardium]" — "How are the organs of the abdomen?" — "The stomach and the intestines are healthy; the liver is white and discolored on the surface."

The next day, in fact, the invalid died, and an autopsy was performed. Madame Lagandee, in a hypnotic sleep, repeated in a firm and unhesitating voice what she had already told Messieurs Cloquet and Chapelain. The latter then led her into the drawing-room that adjoined the room in which they were to perform the autopsy, the door of which was tightly closed, and there, following the knife in the surgeon's hand, she said to those who were staying with her: "Why do they make an incision in the middle of the chest, since the effusion is on the right?"

The information given by the somnambulist was found to be entirely correct, and the official report of the autopsy was written out by Dr. Dronsart.

The narrator, Briere de Boismont, added that the witnesses of this event are all alive and occupy an honorable position in the medical world. Their communications have been interpreted in different ways, but a doubt has never been raised as to their veracity.

Nevertheless, I have seen grave "scholars" burst out laughing while listening to these "cock-and-bull stories."

So we have here an undeniable record of mental vision. We could add to it the story of that chambermaid who, having been put into a hypnotic sleep when her master had gone down to the cellar after a bottle of wine,

cried out that he had just slipped on the stairs and had fallen. When he came up lie found his wife aware of his fall and of the details of his subterranean trip: the somnambulist had related them as they had happened. ("L'Inconnu," page 499.)

The wife of a cavalry colonel, who was hypnotized by her husband, became a somnambulist; during the course of the treatment an indisposition obliged the husband to ask an officer of his regiment to help him. This went on for only eight or ten days. Some time after, during a hypnotic séance, the husband, having put his wife into a hypnotic sleep, asked her to think about this officer, of whom they had had no news. "Ali, the unhappy man!" she cried. "I see him! He is at X—. He wants to kill himself! He is taking up pistol! Run quickly!" The colonel mounted his horse, when he arrived the officer had already committed suicide. (Ibid., page 500.)

We have also seen the story of a young girl who was operated upon in 1868 at Strasburg by Dr. Koerbele, who had ascribed in minute detail to this incredulous surgeon a cyst on the ovary, which was later found by the operator and agreed exactly with the description.

These numerous and widely different experiences, which ye multiplied since the time of Mesmer up to our day, constituted a veritable library, which I do not wish to expatiate upon. But despite all the reserves, all the discussions, all the Legations, all the battles of the academies of medicine of all countries, these experiences are instructive. I have followed hem, under all sorts of conditions, for more than half a century.

I shall follow, in this recital, the chronological order.

When I was about twenty, at the age when you think you ought to conquer the world and when you feel an unquenchable desire to understand and solve everything, I was very much interested in a rather odd man, the writer Henri Delaage, a mystic dreamer, an occultist initiated into the sect of Saint-Martin, the "unknown philosopher," a grandson of Choptal, who was one of Napoleon's ministers. His conversation was rays picturesque and often instructive. For a long time, had studied very attentively the phenomena of hypnotism. Here are some of the events of which he knew at first hand, and of which, for that matter, he has spoken in his works:

Alphonse Esquiros, who was amusing himself one day in hypnotizing his own mother, asked her this question: “Does chance exist? Could you, for example, determine the chances in a lottery?” — “I do not think it would be hard,” she answered. — “Try!” Here the hypnotized woman seemed to make a great effort; her struggle brought a slow and difficult response. “I see a number,” she said at last. — “What is it?” — “Eighty-nine. It is good; it is going to appear.” — “Do you see others?” — “No.” — “Why!” — “God does not wish it.”

The number 89 did, in fact, appear at the next drawing.[2]

The formulas change. This occurred about 1848. Today we should no longer say, “God does not wish it,” but simply, “I see nothing more.”

This may all have been due to chance alone. But we shall see further on, in the chapter on “Knowledge of the Future,” a premonitory reading of four numbers by Barton Larry. Here there are 2,555,189 chances against 1!

Delaage reports also the following happening, which took place at the home of the Vicomtesse de Saint-Mars, with the famous Alexis, a clairvoyant subject, at the time very famous, that had been hypnotized by Marcillet:

Victor Hugo was present at this séance, with his habitual curiosity, and had prepared at his home a package, hidden in the midst of which was a single word printed in large characters. The package was first turned about in all directions by the somnambulist, who, at the end of a moment, spelled out “P-o-l-i—poli. I do not see the next letter, but I see those that come after: i-q-u-e-eight letters—no, nine—t—politique; that is surely it. The word is printed on light-green paper; Monsieur Hugo has taken it from a pamphlet which I see at his home.” Marcillet at once asked Victor Hugo if it were true, and the poet hastened to do justice to the lucidity of the subject. From this time on, second sight counted Victor Hugo among the number of its most illustrious defenders.

[2] Henri Delaage, Les Mysteres du Magnetisme, p. 114.

In our epoch, we call this exercise “thought-reading,” and we think we have found an explanation in this! Let us admit, if we wish, a transmission of cerebral waves; but is not at mental vision?

Delaage told this story in the book that I have just mentioned. He continues it in the following account, which brings on the scene one of our contemporaries of the last century whom I also knew:

Alphonse Karr, one of the men whom it would seem almost impossible to mystify, because the sharpness of his wits is proverbial in Europe, has related what occurred to him with the somnambulist Alexis:

“I had come accompanied by several of my friends, at the home one of whom we had dined. On leaving the house I had broken a branch of flowering white azalea, and I had stuck this branch in empty champagne bottle.

“The man with whom we had dined said to the somnambulist, ‘Do wish to come to my house’ — ‘Yes’ — ‘What do you see in my drawing-room?’ —‘A table with papers, plates, and glasses on it.’ — ‘There is also something on this table which I placed there especially because of you: try to see it.’ — ‘I see a bottle,’ said Alexis. ‘There is some fire; no, it is not fire, but it is like fire. The bottle is empty, but there is something that shines. Ah! it is a champagne bottle! Something is above it, it is the stopper — the end that is in the bottle is thinner than the other end. It is white, it is like paper — wait —’ and he drew a bottle with a branch of azalea, and exclaimed: ‘Ah! it is a flower, a bouquet of flowers. What beautiful branches.’”

In these two experiences it is difficult not to agree that the somnambulist saw at a distance without his eyes, either in the brain of Victor Hugo or of Alphonse Karr, or in some other manner. Let us continue a little longer to read Delaage’s little book, which is almost an official report of this interesting period. Let us remember the facts, without troubling about the theories:

The press of October 17, 1847, contained a long article on a hypnotic séance in which the somnambulist Alexis had read not only closed books, through several pages, but even concealed letters; in a word, he had shown that the magnetic fluid, by illuminating with a supernatural splendor the subject which had been magnetized, permitted the spirit to pierce through the most opaque objects with an ease that left far behind it all the power with which the imagination has endowed magic.

This séance was endorsed with the name of Alexander Dumas and took place at his country house in the presence of honorable men who had attested the truth of the facts related in the written report by signing their names to it.

The astonishment was general. Dumas, curious to produce the phenomena of which he had been a witness, let us persuade him to, himself, magnetize Alexis. The spirit of the somnambulist told him the history of a ring that had been given to him; told him the day and the hour when the man who had confided it to him had become its possessor; then, like those invincible birds which cleave the air, his soul borne on the wings of another's will, he described with admirable precision Tunis and its environment, of which the name alone was known to him in his waking state: in a word, space and time had been conquered. A great number of papers copied the account of these séances; others protested. As they were not able to attack the honor and uprightness of the men who certified that they had seen these prodigies with their own eyes, they made haste to ridicule them, by representing them as honest men whose simplicity had been exploited. They declared that with the help of skilful ingenuity Robert Houdin produced the same marvels every evening in the rooms of the Palais-Royal. Unfortunately, the illustrious prestidigitator had already written a letter to the Marquis de Mirville, in which he admitted the powerlessness of his art to produce these prodigies, and in which he certified on his honor that these phenomena were not produced by any subtlety of a clever sleight of hand.

Here is an extract from this letter:

“During a séance at the home of Marcillet, the following event took place:

“I unsealed a pack of cards which I had brought with me, and the case which I had marked so that it could not be changed. I shuffled them. It was my turn to deal. I dealt with all the precautions of man skilled in the finesse of his art. It was a useless precaution. Alexis stopped me by pointing out a card that I had just placed before him on the table. ‘I have a king,’ he said. ‘You know nothing about it, as the trump card has not yet appeared!’ —‘You will see,’ he answered. ‘Continue.’ I did in fact turn up the eight of spades, and his card was the king of spades. The game was continued in a rather curious manner, for he told me the cards that I ought to play, although my own cards were at the time hidden under the table and tightly clasped in my hand. For each of the cards played he put down one from his own hand without turning it over, and it was always in perfect agreement with the one I had played myself.

“I therefore returned from this séance as astonished as I well might be, and persuaded that neither chance nor skill could have produced such marvelous results.

“Be good enough to receive, etc.

“Robert Hodin,

The celebrated prestidigator in this way vindicated hypnotism from the attacks of which it remained of which it remained the perpetual target, by declaring publicly that his art was powerless to realize this sort of miracles. He proclaimed his convictions in obedience to his conscience.

Thus spoke Delaage. Assuredly the somnambulist did not see with his eyes the cards that were held hidden under the table by a fellow-player, who had already been warned, and whose value as a critic cannot be disputed.

It is not uninteresting to record this reminiscence of the souvenirs of Delaage, despite his ideas and his old-fashioned opinions. I have been far from sharing all of these opinions. Thus, for example, he wrote (page

144): “To the number of privileges lost by man after the original sin, we must place in the first line the possibility of having intercourse with Spirits.” But who today can admit original sin! A little further on he declares that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ cannot be attacked. He is a very good Catholic, though, as to cabalistic mysticism, which is hardly orthodox. We no longer speak the language of this epoch (1847—67); we no longer use the words “fluid magnetism,” “devil,” “soul borne on the wings of another’s will,” “supernatural divination,” — expressions that have fallen into disuse; but we study the same problems.

The difficulty, in this study, is to remain impartial and to keep an absolute independence. This does not generally happen. Each one brings to such an examination preconceived ideas that vitiate the freedom of the reasoning.

Apropos of seeing a hand of cards, when they are hidden, we may read the following in the work of Podmore (“Apparitions and Thought-Transference,” published in 1894 and reprinted in 1915. It is this latter edition that I am considering):

The celebrated Alexis Didier pretended to read when blindfolded with cotton and a tight bandage, played a game of ecarte by naming the cards turned down on the table, deciphered the words in a closed envelope, or in the books that were brought him, and revealed what had been shut up in packages. His success was so great that the famous prestidigitator Robert Houdin visited him in 1847 and declared himself convinced. But Alexis was a professional and had an associate in the person of his hypnotist, Marcillet. There can hardly be any doubt that all these events ought to be attributed to the exercise of a normal vision, operating under unusual and imperfectly understood conditions. It is probable that in experiments of this sort the subjects themselves were often unconscious of the means by which the knowledge reached them and in complete good faith declared themselves to be in possession of supernatural powers.[3]

[3] Apparitions and Thought-Transference (London, 1915), p. 175

Frank Podmore, a well-known psychic author, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, is convinced that all these phenomena, including apparitions, are explained by thought-transference, and he explains them all by this theory. According to him, Alexis received the communication through his hypnotist, Marcillet, or from his partner, who without trickery, but by looking, innocently transmitted their cerebral impressions.

An American psychic no less well known than Podmore, James Hyslop, professor at Columbia University, has also considered this same game of cards, and here is his interpretation:[4]

Alexis Didier mystified even Robert Houdin, the prince of prestidigitators and illusionists.

Didier was employed by a man who had e reputation of a gentleman. He apparently read cards turned face down upon the table, sentences out of a closed book, etc. But in the absence of any verified report as to the precautions taken to elude fraud, we have really no reason to see in it anything extraordinary: it is simply an example of the way in which a credulous public can be duped.

Thus, Podmore and Hyslop imagine that Victor Hugo, who studied Alexis in order to get positive information, Alphonse Karr, whose keen and critical spirit were alike known to me, Alexander Dumas, Henri Delaage, Robert Houdin, were poor servers and let themselves be duped. “It would appear from them that Marcillet saw the cards, read the notes, and communicated it all to his subject, either by skill or by unconscious transmission of thought.” But it was not at all this fashion that these things came to pass.

They have also supposed that there were tricks of sleight hand. This is an inadmissible supposition, according to Robert Houdin himself. The trick of which I have spoken well known, for that matter, and I have seen it performed Buy times in my own drawing-room, by the successors of Robert Houdin, Cazeneuve, and Jacobs. In this game of cards, the prestidigitator always conquers his adversary, without any mystery of second sight. But in this case the game is prepared; the cards are placed

[4] Enigmas of Psychical Research (Boston, 1906), p. 274

in a certain order; the prestidigitator shuffles, but very skillfully, without changing the order; the partner cuts, but the former has prepared the cut; and in fact it is all very simple for such tapering fingers as those of Jacobs, and even for thick fingers like those of Cazeneuve. In my drawing-room I have had such good observers as Admiral Mouchez, Felix Tisserand, directors of the Observatoire, General Parmentier, Herve Faye, eminent scholars, who, despite their scientific titles, played cards very well (I have never known how), stupefied by the fellow-player who at once took their tricks and knew their card every time in advance. But this trick of cards cannot be carried out with a pack bought from a shop, and still unopened, and as for affirming that Mardillet was the confederate of Alexis, that is a pure supposition, untenable to those who have known of the powers of Alexis in a state of hypnosis (of which one can learn, among other sources, from the Memoirs of Lafontaine).

It is quite true that the methods of observation have not always been scrupulously accurate and that the conclusions have not always been well weighed; but that is not a reason to reject everything and to refuse to separate the good grain from the chaff. The supra-normal faculties of Alexis cannot be disputed.

On the whole, to Podmore these cases of mental vision are transmission of thought. For Hyslop the particular case is very doubtful; the other cases which he has examined seem to him both certain and inexplicable by any theory, including telepathy, and he has a tendency to attribute them to communications from the souls of the dead. “Spiritualistic elements are generally associated with clairvoyant incidents.”

I do not wish to maintain any hypothesis, for the observations are not yet sufficient; science is not made in a day, and astronomy wandered for millions of years before reaching the truth. It seems to me that what is necessary before everything is to establish the absolute reality of still disputed facts. It is not impossible that either the transmissions of subconscious thoughts or telepathic cerebral waves are concerned in these cases.

This sight of the cards, while in a state of hypnosis, cannot, despite all negations, be contested. It has often been verified. We find in a certain number of accounts, worthy of all confidence, the corroboration of card-players who played with their eyes tightly closed.

In his “Lettres sur le magnetisme et le somnambulisme,” published in 1840, Dr. Frapart wrote what follows to a friend:

I have already told you that Monsieur Ricard had promised to bring to my house, provisionally, Calyste, his best somnambulist, to put him to sleep before the persons whom I should invite, and to make bun play cards with his eyes bandaged: then, if he was in good condition, to put him through other experiments quite as incomprehensible and marvelous.

So yesterday the séance promised by Monsieur Ricard took place, in the presence of sixty persons, all of whom, except for Dr. Teste, were incredulous. I will tell you about what happened.

As soon as Calyste was asleep, or seemed asleep—for I know of no positive sign of sleep—two strangers each laid a handful of cotton wadding on his eyes and over these a large silk handkerchief, the ends of which were brought forward toward the nose and tied. Then we made sure that the bandage was tightly tied, well placed, and that along its lower border—an all-important precaution—the cotton formed a thick pad which was an impenetrable obstacle to sight. At once eight packs of cards were brought in, still intact; we chose one by chance, tore open the envelop, and began. Monsieur Ricard did not touch the somnambulist, did not speak to him, and it would have been impossible for him to see the hand of the person who was playing. When matters had been arranged like this, everything went on as if between two skilful and wide-awake persons. In this way the somnambulist named the cards that he held and those of his adversary.

Such is the fact. Three persons took turns, each of them playing ‘two games, so that a hundred cards passed before Calyste, who often named them and always saw them, as he always played what it was best to play.

Was this experience the result of sleight of hand?

But we were all of us upon our guard, and we scrutinized everything, fingered everything, analyzed everything. For example, did the bandage have some imperceptible fissure’? No, for it was composed of

two handfuls of cotton wadding and of a silk handkerchief which skeptical and skilful people had adjusted.

Was the bandage adjusted in such a fashion that the somnambulist could see below it'? Besides the cotton placed over the eyes beneath the bandage, some had been pushed in from below, under the bandage, so that the cotton formed a wad.

Had the cards been prepared? No, for the cases of all the packs still carried the revenue stamps.

Did not the somnambulist recognize the cards by touching them? No, for he named those of his adversary without touching them.

Did not the hypnotist have some means of communication with the somnambulist? No, for the hypnotist did not speak, did not move, did not look at the cards, and did not touch Calyste.

Finally, was it possible for some one by some sort of means to show Calyste the proper play from his own hand? No, for every one remained silent in anxious expectancy, which was soon followed by astonishment and admiration.

Therefore, we were as certain as it is possible to be that we were not deceived in regard to the bandage, the cards, the somnambulist, the hypnotist or the adversary himself.

We see that this experience antedated that of Robert Houdin, reported by Delaage. We can cite many others, all of which resemble one another in this sense, that those who deny the whole thing, as a foregone conclusion, can always pretend that the experimenters were tricked by those more skilful than they. Such idle discussions would waste our time.

A very skeptical magistrate, Monsieur Seguier,[5] went incognito to the house of Alexis.

[5] Seguier was not a man to let himself appear a fool. For nearly forty years, from 1811 to 1848, he as First President, had been at the head of the Paris law courts. "He was quite at home in the palace and let it be clearly seen," wrote Monsieur Henri Robert. Under Louis Phillipe he was a little old man, dry and lively. He heard the advocates with visible impatience. The mortier over his eyes, as if he were in ambuscade behind his desk, he seemed to lie in wait for the litigants. He interrupted the lawyers, criticized them, contradicted them sharply, altered their pleadings, and was pitiless towards those who

“Where was I at two o’clock this afternoon?” he asked.

“In your study. It is cluttered with papers—twists of tobacco - drawings - and little machines. There is a pretty little bell on your desk.”

“No, there is no bell on my desk.”

“I am not mistaken. You have one—I see it—to the left of the writing-table—on the desk.” “By Heaven! I must go to the bottom of this thing!”

Monsieur Seguier rushed home and found a little bell on his desk that Madame Seguier had placed there during the afternoon.

Such is the simple account. Vision at a distance! Here there was evidently no reading of the mind of the questioner, or suggestion, of thought; which does, however, seem to be the case in the instance that follows.

Delaage tells how the Comte de Saint-Aulaire, the well-known diplomat, after having called hypnotism “foolish trash” came to make honorable amends. He wagered he could prove it was impossible for Alexis, in spite of his pretensions, to read a well-concealed paper, and he went to him with a thick envelop, substantially and skillfully fastened and sealed.

“‘What is there under this fold?” asked the ambassador.

“There is a paper folded four times.”

“And on this paper?”

“A half-line of writing.”

“Can you read it?”

showed themselves mediocre or whom he considered to be so. He also distributed praise: “Monsieur Paillet pleaded yesterday in a perfect manner; I say it to the honor of the bar.” He had once replied to a minister of Charles X, Monsieur de Peytonnet, “The court executes judgments, but does not perform services.” One day, at the opening of an audience, he said: “I do not see Monsieur Gicquel. Advocates should never do anything but attend to their affairs.” “Mr. President,” the barrister who was just arriving all out of breath, answered from the back of the room: “I was at the Cour de cassation, occupied in defending one of your judgments.” – “It was needless; my judgments defend themselves.” “Which has not prevented them from being reversed.” At another time a barrister asked for a delay because his child had just died. The learned and pompous Seguier refused and added: “The day on which the presiding judge was married or lost his wife he came to the audience just the same, and when a priest loses his father he ought to say mass nonetheless. We hear the barrister who is present at the audience.”

“Certainly. And when I have read it you will retract what you have written?”

“I do not think so.”

“I am sure of it.”

“If you succeed I will promise you henceforth to believe whatever you wish.”

“Then believe at once, for you have written, ‘I do not believe.’”

The fame of this seer is readily understood, and we can understand how Delaage should have written his special little book (1847) “Le sommeil magnetique explique par le somnambule Alexis.” We may read some curious statements in it: “‘Plunged into an artificial sleep, man sees through opaque bodies, from considerable distances.’ —Signed, Father Lacordaire.” And this other: “‘ If there exists in the world a science which makes the soul visible, it is undeniably magnetism.’ —Signed: Alexander Dumas.” This work is concerned solely with the powers of Alexis.

The second sight of the somnambulist Alexis, hypnotized by Marcillet, has been appreciated by all those who have studied these questions. Here is one of his most remarkable revelations. The testimony is almost official, — that of the of the Mont-de-Piete who in this capacity had been the victim of a robbery, the author of which was discovered and arrested largely through the revelations of the famous medium. The account is contained in a letter that Monsieur Prevost himself sent to the editor of the paper “Le Pays,” the following words:

It was in 1849, in August, that one of my employees disappeared, carrying with him a large sum.

The most active search of the police was without success, when one of my friends, Monsieur Linstant, a lawyer, went to consult Alexis, without letting me know of his plan.

“The sum stolen,” said the somnambulist, “is very considerable. It almost reaches two hundred thousand francs.”

That was correct. Alexis continued, saying that the dishonest work was named Dubois, and that he saw him at Brussels, at the Hotel des Princes, whither he had gone.

Linstant left for Brussels. He learned on his arrival that Dubois had indeed stayed at the Hotel des Princes, but that a few hours be-ire he had left the city.

Alexis declared that he saw Dubois at the gambling-house at Spa, Lt he was losing a great deal of money and that when arrested would not have any left.

That very evening the narrator set off, but at Brussels he was so delayed by the legal formalities he had to go through in order to arrest his thief that he arrived at Spa only to learn that the man he was after had left the city a few days before.

When he had once more returned to Paris, he went again to see Alexis.

"You haven't much patience," he told me. "To tell the truth, Dubois went to Aix-la-Chapelle. He continued to play, for he had lost heavily; just now he has returned to Spa, where he will lose in play the little that remains to him."

I wrote immediately to the authorities of Brussels and Spa, and a few days later Dubois was arrested at Spa. He had lost everything in gambling.[6]

We see that not only was the medium able to read, with his eyes closed, a book that was out of his sight, but he could even follow from a distance the peregrinations of a thief.

This Alexis had such an extraordinary reputation as a seer, that the hypnotist Lafontaine., who had often had disappointments with his unprepared subjects, sent from Lyons to Paris for him, so as to be sure of succeeding in his exhibitions. We find the confirmation of these tales in the memoirs of Lafontaine (Volume II, page 160 to 171). They merely repeat what has been published above.

[6] Alphonse Primot, La psychologie d'une conversion du positivisme au spiritualisme, p. 152

What surprises us most is that this “mental vision” should have for so long a time been acknowledged, and that hardly any one now admits it. Ignorance is universal. I should not like to suppose a lack of honesty.

The naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace describes fourteen[7] séances of Dr. Edwin Lee at Brighton, in private houses, with this same Alexis Didier. In each of these séances, the latter played cards with his eyes bandaged, often named the cards of his opponents as well as his own: he also read many of the cards written by the visitors and put inside envelops. He deciphered no matter what line asked him in no matter what book, eight or ten pages farther on than the open page, and described the contents of a quantity of boxes, cases, and other receptacles.

Dr. Lee also reports a game of cards between the celebrated Robert Houdin and Alexis, and added the following:

Houdin drew a book from his pocket and asked Alexis to read a line in a special spot eight pages farther on. The clairvoyant stuck a pin in to mark the line and read four words that were found on e corresponding line on the ninth succeeding page.

Houdin declared that this was astounding and the next day signed declaration: “I cannot refuse to affirm that the facts related here are scrupulously exact; the more I have reflected, the more I have found it impossible to class them among the tricks which are objects of my art.”

Russell Wallace points out (page 90) other cases of vision vouched for by Dr. Gregory in his work “Letters on Magnetism.” For example, some persons on their way to the séance to see these phenomena, bought in some shop, chosen themselves, a few dozen printed mottos shut up in nutshells. They put the shells in a sack, and the clairvoyant drew out one and read the motto enclosed in it. The nut was broken and examined; dozens of mottos were read correctly this way. One of these mottos contained ninety-eight words.

[7] The Miracles and Modern Spiritualism, p. 95.

Wallace adds that as he has in his hands the depositions of Gregory, Dr. Mayo, Dr. Lee, Dr. Haddock, and hundreds other men no less well qualified to observe and no less honorable, affirming similar facts, we cannot suppose that all these persons were the victims of tricks it was impossible to detect, especially in the case of skeptical doctors who had come to diagnose what had happened and a master of sleight hand as clear-sighted as Robert Houdin. Either every one the manifestations of second sight reported by observers (and they can be numbered by thousands) is the result of trickery, or we have the irrefutable proof that a certain number of persons possess an inner sense that ought to be studied. If ordinary sight were as rare as second sight, it would be as difficult to prove its reality as it is to establish existence of this marvelous faculty. The evidence of the latter's existence is absolutely conclusive, to whoever examines and who does not let himself be deceived by the childish idea that we can separate a priori what is possible from what is not possible.

These experiments have been made a hundred times, especially between 1820 and 1860. We have only to read the pages of Dr. Bertrand (the father of Joseph Bertrand, the celebrated perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences) of Petetin, of General Noizet, of Lafontaine, of Dr. Comet, and of numerous experimenters of this epoch in order to be convinced of their value and of their absolute authenticity. One of the most active, Dr. Frapart, desired especially to convince one of the pontiffs of official science and a declared adversary, Dr. Bouillaud, professor of the Faculty of Medicine, and sent him a sort of imperial mandate. The great man replied in the same tone, that he had a perfect right to be incredulous and that it was not the fanatic Frapart who should give him orders. He wrote:

As for this new subject of hypnotism, of which you speak, and which seems to you destined to bring about the great work of my conversion, I do not in the least refuse to witness its miracles. However, if, after I had seen them, I should happen to reply to you with this famous doctrine of a philosopher of my own sort; "I believe because you have seen, but if I had seen I should not have believed, " if, I say, I should reply to you in this way, how could you object? The experience of which you tell me

could not, indeed, prove a physical impossibility, such as sight without eyes; and, as I have said at the Academy, in such cases it is best to follow the example of the Academy of Sciences when it is informed that the square of the circle has been found.

Considering the at once upright and aggressive character of Frapart, we can imagine that this sentence did not fall on deaf ears: “If I had seen I should not have believed, because it is a physical impossibility.” Therefore, he began to jeer at it without much regard for the official character of the learned professor, who replied in his turn:

This is my last word: I don’t believe—and never shall believe— that one can see without the aid of one’s eyes. It is not at all, as you say, because the thing is extraordinary that I do not and will not believe in it; it is because it is supernatural, and, what is more, against nature. I believe, on the other hand, in many extraordinary facts. If I do not believe in these, it is not because I do I not understand them, it is because they are evidently, clearly, physiologically impossible.

To these arguments Frapart replied, in 1838, as all men of sense reply today:

It does not become any one, even the greatest genius, to define the limits of the possible, because the possible is as infinite as space and me; and although we have, so to speak, surrounded it with our theories, at each instant it surpasses them and laughs at us. Moreover, does not experience teach us that what seems impossible today will perhaps be evident tomorrow? For instance, the discovery of America, also of gunpowder, also of the circulation of the blood, also of galvanism, also of the compass, also of printing, also of lightning-conductors, also of aerostats, also of vaccine, also of medicaments, etc. And does not reason tell us that there is nothing absolutely false but what is contradictory or absolutely true but what is evident?

Therefore we can say that it is obviously impossible to recognize triangle without three angles, or a stick without two ends, because these things are contradictory, but we cannot say that it is obviously impossible to watch a man who reads by the nape of his neck, or another who hears by the epigastrium, or a third who sees things a hundred leagues away, a fourth who foretells the future, a fifth who insensible to pain, a sixth who describes his own sickness or that of others, finally a seventh who has the instinct for remedies.

No, no one can say, under pain of offending reason, that these facts are evidently impossible, because no one has the right or the power to say to the possible: "Thou shalt go no further."

It is true That these phenomena are very extraordinary; for all that are they more extraordinary, more marvelous, more inexplicable than those which we notice every day? In nature, is not everything mystery? is not everything marvel? But there are marvels that are known to every one, and there are others that are uncommon. We imagine we understand the former, for we see them unceasingly, and we deny the latter because we see them only rarely; and, for all that, we explain neither the one set nor the other; we verify them, that is all.

This reasoning of Dr. Frapart 's, at the time not understood, was, according to all the evidence, superior to the systematic blindness of Dr. Bouillaud, despite the official superiority of the latter over his modest confrere. The Academy of Medicine, of which lie represented the dominant idea, remained obstinately on the side of truth.

Professor Bouillaud, who was a member of the Academy of Medicine, of the Academy of Science, and of all the most accredited learned societies, was a particularly remarkable type of those very small souls shut up in the narrowest possible brains that one can imagine, firmly set in their religious beliefs and absolutely incapable of reasoning freely. He was the hero of the anecdote that I related in "L'Inconnu," concerning the invention of the phonograph. On March 11, 1878, I was present at the meeting of the Academy of Sciences, that day of hilarious memory, when the physicist Du Moncel presented Edison's phonograph to the learned assembly. When the presentation had been made the apparatus began to

recite docilely the sentence registered on its record. Then we saw an academician of ripe age, his mind imbued, saturated even, with the traditions of the classical culture, revolt nobly against the audacity of the innovator; we saw him hurl himself upon Edison's representative and seize him by the throat, crying out: "Wretch! we are not going to let ourselves be duped by a ventriloquist!" This member of the Institute was Monsieur Bouillaud. The most curious part of it is that six months later, on September 30th, at a similar meeting, he esteemed it an honor to declare that after a mature examination he was convinced that there was nothing to it but ventriloquism and that "we cannot admit that a vile metal can replace the noble apparatus of human phonation." The phonograph was to him only an acoustic illusion. Such people are "fastened to the rear of the chariot of progress" and delay everything by impeding its forward march and succeeding in hiding the light under a bushel, for their official titles impose upon the sheep-like masses.

This great man was the physician of Arsene Houssaye, and we can read in the "Confessions" of this charming writer that he was responsible for the death of his delightful wife and their child,— and also of the second wife.

Such is the "scientific reasoning" of certain scholars. We could wish that the title of Member of the Institute conferred intelligence upon its elect and opened their minds.

These remarks called forth by Bouillaud could be applied to his colleagues in the Academy, Chevreuil and Babinet, in regard to the problem of physics.

My regretted friend Dr. Macario wrote in 1857[8] that "vision through opaque bodies and at unlimited distances, which is not admitted by scholars and which is contrary to all the known physiological laws, as well as inexplicable, seemed nevertheless to be certain"; and he noted the following as confirming it:

Dr. Bellenger was convinced of this by repeated experiences. Many times he has written out in his home, without any witness, a sentence

[8] Du Sommeil, des reves et du somnambulisme, p. 195.

on a sheet of paper that he has folded and refolded and placed inside two or three wrappings, carefully sealed. The somnambulist has been able to read the enclosed sentence through the opaque sheets, or to write it on the back of the envelop.

This phenomenon had already been verified in 1831 by a commission of the Academy of Medicine. In fact, one reads in its reports: "Monsieur Ribes, a member of the Academy, presented a catalogue which he drew from his pocket. The somnambulist (it was Monsieur Petit d'Athis, hypnotized by Monsieur du Potet), after several efforts that seemed to tire him, read quite distinctly: "Lavater. It is very hard to understand men." These last words were printed in very small characters. They placed under his eyes (which, of course, were shut) a passport; he recognized it and called it a "passman"; they substituted for the passport a permission to carry arms that, as we know, almost exactly resembles a passport, and they showed it to him on the blank side. Monsieur Petit could only recognize that it was a framed piece of paper, very much like the other. They turned it over, and after a few minutes of hesitation he said what it was and read very distinctly these words: "By law," and at the left, "Permission to carry arms." They showed him an open letter; he said he could not read it, as he did not understand English. It was in fact, a letter written in that language.

All these experiments greatly fatigued Monsieur Petit. They let him rest a little, then, as he was fond of cards, they suggested that, in order to rest himself, he should take a hand at cards. Monsieur Reynal, former inspector of the university, played a hundred points at piquet with him, and lost. Several times they tried unsuccessfully to trick him into a mistake by changing the cards.

A law student, Monsieur Paul Villegrand, paralyzed on the left side, who was put into a hypnotic sleep by Dr. Foissac, also read with his eyes shut. The lids were kept constantly closed by the experimenters in turn; they handed him a new pack of cards, breaking the revenue stamp and shuffling them, and Paul recognized the king of spades, the ace of clubs, the seven of diamonds, the queen of diamonds and the eight of diamonds.

They presented him, while his eyes were held shut by Monsieur Segelas, with a volume that Monsieur Husson had brought with him. He read the title, “History of France,” but he could not read the intervening lines and he read on the fifth only the name “Anquetil,” which was preceded by the preposition “by.” They opened the book at page 89 and he read on the first line “the number of his—” he passed over the word troupes and continued: “at the moment when they thought him the most occupied with the pleasures of the carnival,” etc.[9]

These facts, which were clearly established in the report drawn up in the name of the Academy of Medicine by Monsieur Husson, carry with them the sanction of science and impartiality. But, strictly speaking, it could be maintained that the somnambulists had seen these sentences in the minds of the experimenters. That may be true so far as concerns some of the experiments made by the Academy, but this explanation cannot be applied to the following facts, for here the experimenters did not themselves know the sentences that they caused the somnambulists to read:

Quite recently, one of my friends, Dr. N—, who is surely incapable of wishing to impose on any one, found himself at an evening reception where there were many artists and men of letters; all these persons knew one another intimately. Among them was Alexis, the celebrated somnambulist. Monsieur Mardilet hypnotized him and this is what occurred. My friend Dr. N— went into an adjoining room to find a book with its leaves still uncut; then, without opening it, he asked the somnambulist to read such and such a line on such and such a page. The somnambulist hesitated, seemed to make a great effort, then asked for a pen and wrote the line indicated; at that they cut the leaves of the book, found the page and the line, and every one, transfixed with astonishment, learned that the experiment had succeeded perfectly; only the sentence in the book was written in English, and the somnambulist, in transcribing it, had translated it into French. It was a curious fact that, a few minutes later, this same somnambulist could

[9] It was the same Villegrand who convinced Broussais. The latter wrote secretly a little note, placed his fingers on the lid of the somnambulist, gave the note to Dr. Frapart, who afterward gave it to Villegrand, who read unhesitantly the three lines written there. (See Moutin, Le Magnetisme humain, p. 290.)

not read the word "Paris," written in large letters on a sheet of paper that had been folded twice.

Here we surely cannot invoke the transmission of thought, as no one had opened this uncut book.

Thus spoke Dr. Macario, more than half a century ago. That which they sometimes accuse us of affirming a little audaciously has been known for a long time. If I have quoted these old affirmations of 1850, 1840, 1830, and even 1786 (Puysegur) and 1778 (Encyclopedia, Vol. XXXI), it is in order to show that these psychic phenomena have been proved for many years— we might say for many centuries. But let us continue. The mine is rich.

I, for my part, have often had occasion to hear accounts of "mental vision" and to verify them personally.

In the course of the summer of the year 1865 I stayed, during a month of vacation at Sainte-Adresse, on the slope of Cape la Heve, to the west of Havre (5 rue des Pecheurs), and I had opposite me a celebrated doctor who bore the rather astronomical name of Comet. His wife had given him curious examples of this power. She was subject, at certain periods, to somnambulism, during which she read with her eyes shut, through opaque bodies, named the smallest objects that were shown her shut up in the hand, divined thoughts, saw unexpected actions taking place in the apartments adjoining hers, named exactly the days and hours on which her next attacks were to seize her, and prescribed the medicines that were to cure her.

We can read the history of Madame Comet's cure by means of her hypnotic revelations, as well as the account of the sight of her internal organs, in the "Lettres sur le magnetisme," by Dr. Frapart, which can leave no doubt about the actuality of these events. The observations of Dr. Comet are followed by similar declarations made by Dr. Alphonse Teste, also about his wife. All these inquiries date from the year 1840. The author wrote that it would be necessary to wait fifty years before science officially recognized the value of them. He was mistaken. In 1890, the prejudices due to ancient ignorance were not dissipated. And they are not now.

Time passes quickly, for that matter, and humanity is slow in its progress. I said on the first page of this work that I had begun this study more than half a century ago. The lines that we have just read, and the year 1865, are the proof of it.

Among the numerous experiments that can help us in the solution of the problem we are studying here, I shall cite a very curious one reported in one of his works[10] by Dr. Gibier, a former interne of the Paris hospitals. It took place in April, 1885, and he has often repeated it before witnesses, whom he names. This reading, independently of the organs of sight, was done in a state of hypnotism (the modern name for magnetism and mesmerism). Here is the account of the experiment:

The subject was a young woman of about twenty, of Jewish descent. Once she was asleep, and in an intermediate state of a materialization, which was not lethargy, nor somnambulism, nor even a talking trance, but rather what the professional hypnotists call "lucid somnambulism," I put a pad of cotton over each eye; then over them a large, thick napkin or silk handkerchief that was tied behind the nape of the neck. The first time I attempted the test of which I am speaking, I was very much astonished at its success: I must say that at the time I did not have the experience which a long series of investigations have since given me, and, I must add, long and continuous studies of the question as well.

I took from my library the first hook that I laid my hand on: 1 opened it by chance. When I had held it a moment, the cover uppermost, without looking at it, about two centimeters above the hair of the hypno-magnetized young woman, I asked her to read the last line of the page on the left. After a moment of waiting she answered: "Ah, yes, I see — wait." Then she continued: "'Identity leads to unity, for if the soul—'" She stopped and added: "I can't do more; that is enough; it tires me." I yielded to her and turned over the volume. It was a book on philosophy, and the first line, less two words, had been perfectly seen and read by the a materialized invible spirit of my sleeper.

[10] Analyse des choses (Paris and Philadelphia, 1890), p. 137

It is, quite natural to be prudent about admitting the truth of such statements. For a long time I myself attributed the success of these experiments to simple trickery, and I had had direct proof of it, in my own house, especially one day when a very elegant woman of the world, playing the role of medium, had found means, under the pretext of indisposition, to go and rest an hour in my library, and had profited by it in order to consult an ancient book so as to be able to read it later, in a state of pretended somnambulism (reading from such a page and such a line in such a book). But it is quite certain that trickery is not practiced today, and that there cannot even be a question of it in the experiences that I have just offered as examples. Do not let us be willfully blind.

We shall admit that these are most varied experiences, and that they all prove the existence of mental vision by means of a psychic faculty independent of normal vision. We have, indeed, an embarrassment of riches from which to choose the proof of these phenomena.

Let us compare some other experiences.

Let us open, for example, that carefully verified work of Sir Oliver Lodge on “Human Survival” (page 110) and quote the curious spiritual communication of Stainton Moses (which I abridge):

Mr. Stainton Moses, professor at the University College of London, had acquired the habit of writing automatically, like a medium, in the solitude of each morning. A great number of writings that have been obtained in this way have been published and are familiar to those who study these problems; but the following incident is of a surprising character and offers a singularly striking example of the power of vision at a distance.

The present text was obtained by Mr. Stainton Moses, when he was at a séance in Dr. Speer’s library and his hand wrote automatically, in supposed conversation with invisible speakers. Here is this episode.

Stainton Moses, speaking to the so-called spirit: “Can you read?”

Reply: “No, friend, I cannot, but Zaehariah Legray as well as Rector can.”

S. M.: “Is one of these spirits here?”

Reply: “I will go and find one.”

(They wait some time.)

“Rector is here.”

S.M.: “Can you read?”

Reply: “Yes, friend, but with difficulty.”

S. M.: “Will you write for me the last line of the first book of the AEneid?”

Reply: “Wait—

“‘Omnibus errantem terris et fluctibus aestas.”

Stainton Moses verifies the quotation, which is exact, but thinks at once that he may have known and unconsciously preserved it in his memory. He therefore asks another question:

“Can you go into the library, look at the next to the last volume on the second shelf, and read me the last paragraph of page ninety-four? I do not know what the book is and I am even ignorant of its title.”

After a short lapse of time, Mr. Stainton Moses, still writing automatically, himself traced the following words: “I shall prove by a short historical recital that the papacy is a novelty which arose gradually and has grown great since the primitive times of pure Christianity, not merely since the apostolic age but even since the lamentable union of the Church and State by Constantine.”

The volume in question was found to be a curious work bearing a rather fantastic title: “Antipopopriestian, an attempt to liberate and purify Christianity from popery, politikirkolatry and priest rule” by Roger.

If that is not reading by the spirit, what is it?

Now, who was it who read? Was it Stainton Moses himself, unconsciously! But how? Was a spirit distinct from himself directing his hand? Let us limit ourselves here to verifying the fact; it was the spirit which read, it was not the material eye.

Let us recall, in this connection,’ the experiences of Sir William Crookes, consisting in the reading of sentences unknown to him and to the medium. This medium, a lady, gave communications by means of a little

board to which a pencil was attached and which, conducted by her hand, slipped over a paper.

I hoped to discover the means of proving that what she wrote was not due to the unconscious action of her brain. The planchette, as it always does, affirmed that although it was put in action by the brain and arm of this lady, the intelligence which directed it belonged to an invisible being, who played upon the brain of the lady as on a musical instrument and in this way moved her muscles.

Therefore, I said to this intelligence: "Do you see what there is in this room 'I" "Yes," wrote planchette. "Do you see that newspaper and can you read?" I added, putting my finger on a number of "The Times" which was on the table behind me, but without looking at it. "Yes," answered planchette. "Well," I went on, "write me out the word which is now covered by my finger and I will believe you." Planchette began to move slowly and, not without great difficulty, wrote the word "however." I turned about and saw that this word was covered by the tip of my finger.

When I made this experiment I had carefully avoided looking at the paper and it would have been impossible for the lady, even if she had tried, to see a single one of the printed words, for she was seated at a table, the paper was on another table behind me, and my body hid it from her sight.

These readings by mediums seem to indicate the action of exterior intelligences.

A very characteristic supra-normal vision was given to Monsieur Maxwell, doctor of medicine, general advocate of the court of appeals at Bordeaux, by a very sensitive subject, Madame Angullana, whom he had just hypnotized for experimental purposes.[11]

[11] See Les Forces naturelles inconnues, p. 447

Madame Angullana pretended to have gone out of the house.

I begged her to go and see what Monsieur B—, one of my friends who was well known to her, was doing. It was twenty minutes past ten in the evening. To our great surprise she told me that she saw Monsieur B—, half-clad, walking barefoot over stone. This seemed quite senseless to us. Nevertheless, I took occasion to see my friend the next day. Although lie was well versed in phenomena, Monsieur B— appeared greatly astonished and said these very words to me:

"Yesterday I was not well. One of my friends, who lives with me, advised me to try the Kneipp cure and urged me so insistently that, in order to satisfy him, I tried it for the first time yesterday evening, walking barefoot over cold stone."

To these observations I will add the following recent one, which we owe to the celebrated American physicist Edison, and the value of which as a critical experiment cannot be contested by any one. Here is a report written by himself.[12]

The man of whom I am going to speak was sent to me by one of my oldest friends, who said to me by way of introduction: "This man Reese is able to do certain strange things. I should like you to know him. Perhaps you will be able to explain his powers."

I appointed a meeting. Reese arrived at my laboratory on the day set. I had some of my workmen called in, in order to experiment with them. Reese asked one of them, a Norwegian, to go into an adjoining room and write on a bit of paper the maiden name of his mother, her place of birth, and several other things. The Norwegian did so, folded the paper, and kept it in his closed hand. Reese told us the exact contents. He added later that the young man had a ten-crown piece of money in his pocket, which was true.

[12] See Annales des Sciences psychiques, May, 1916

After he had made several similar experiments with other employees, I asked him to make one like them with me. Then I went into another building and wrote these words:

"Is there anything better than hydroxid of nickel for an alkaline battery?"

I was then experimenting with my alkaline electric battery, and I was a little afraid of not being on the right path. After having written the above sentence, I took up another problem and gave all my attention to solving it, so as to throw Reese off the scent if he was trying to read in my mind what I had written. I then came back into the room where I had left him.

The moment I entered the room he said: "No, there is nothing better than hydroxid of nickel for an alkaline battery."

He had read my question exactly.

I do not pretend to be able to explain this faculty. I am convinced that the needs of civilization will produce some great discovery by means of men endowed with this power. The rare seers of the present generation will become the multitude of the coming generations. The normal intelligence of the future will rapidly develop and complete the work of the normal intelligence of today.

About two years after the experiences which I have just related, the door-boy of my laboratory entered and told me that Reese was in the waiting-room and wished to see me. I took my pencil and wrote in microscopic letters, "Keno," folded the paper, and put it in my pocket. Then I told the boy to bring in Reese.

"Reese, I have a scrap of paper in my pocket. What is written on it?"

Without an instant's hesitation he answered, "Keno."

Some time after the experiments made in my laboratory, Dr. James Hanna Thompson, a well-known alienist, arranged for a fully representative séance at his home. He went into his library, wrote some words on little sheets of paper, and hid them. Reese remained, talking, in the drawing-room until Thompson returned and then said to him:

"At the back of the drawer to the left of your table is a bit of paper on which is written the word 'opsonic.' Under the book lying on your table there is a bit of paper bearing another word 'ambicepter. ' On another little paper is written the word 'antigen.'"

The information given by the seer was entirely correct. Thompson was stupefied, and confessed that he yielded to the evidence.

A few years ago I undertook a series of experiments to attempt to transfer the thought of one person to another by all sorts of means, but without the least result. Also, I tried to solve the phenomenon by the help of an electric apparatus fastened to the head of the operators. Four among us first stayed in different rooms, joined by the electric systems of which I have just spoken. Afterward we sat in the four corners of the same room, gradually bringing our chairs closer together toward the center of the room, until our knees touched, and for all that we obtained no result.

But Reese has no need of any apparatus or of any special condition in order to function.

So spoke Edison. All those who experimented with him testified to the same things, particularly Monsieur Schrenck-Notzing, who made a special study of it.

A curious episode in the life of this "seer" is an encounter he had with the law, in which, having been accused of fraud, at the end of the trial he invited the judge to write some words himself upon a paper and to keep the paper in his hand. He then read everything that had been written by the judge. Needless to say, he was acquitted.

I have gathered together these instances of "mental vision" by the hundreds.

One of the most remarkable is assuredly that of Professor Grassert of Montpellier, who, having hidden four lines written by himself, in a thick envelop tightly sealed, saw these lines read three hundred meters away, by Dr. Ferroul's medium ("Annales des Sciences psychiques," 1897; page 322).

We have here a mine of unsuspected riches. I shall also mention in this place the following tale which was brought to me by my learned colleague of the Astronomical Society of France, M. H. Daburon, with this profession of faith: “I know of no more captivating matter than the study of the soul, undertaken in your work ‘L‘Inconnu,’ and I wish, with all readers in love with truth, that this great work might have successors. Also, it interests me to point out to you, if you do not know it already, the following fact, which is an extract from the correspondence of the Duchess of Orleans, Princess Palatine.” Here is this letter:

About ten years ago a French gentleman who had been a page to the Marshal d’Humieres, and who had married one of my ladies in waiting, brought with him to France a savage from Canada. One day while they were at table the savage, his face convulsed, began to weep. Longueil, as the gentleman was called, asked him what was the matter with him and if he was in pain. The savage only wept more bitterly. Longueil insisted and the savage said: “Do not force me to tell you, for it is you it concerns, and not me.” When he was urged more than ever, he ended by saying, “I saw from the window that your brother had been murdered in such a spot in Canada.” Longueil began to laugh and answered: “You have gone mad!” The savage answered, “I am not at all mad; write down what I am telling you and you will see if I am mistaken.” Longueil wrote it down, and six months later, when the ships arrived from Canada, he learned that his brother’s death had occurred at the exact moment and in the very spot where the savage had seen it in a vision through the window. This is an entirely true tale.

Versailles, March 2, 1719.

The Princess Palatine did not pass as one easily duped, at the court of her husband, the Duke of Orleans, regent of the kingdom; and at the time of the regency Paris and Versailles were assuredly far from mysticism. The fact reported here ought to be considered authentic. How did the Canadian seer see “in the air”? As one reads in a crystal ball or in a glass of water; that is to say, it was the spirit of the soothsayer that was

operating. It does not seem that any other conclusion can be drawn from these observations.

Gratien de Semur, a remarkably skeptical writer and a scoffer who had ridiculed the story of Pliny's ghost, as well as that of the assassin of Cicero, published in 1843 a very amusing book, entitled "Traite des erreurs et des prejuges," in that he made an exception of a telepathic sensation which had occurred in his own neighborhood. (He was far from suspecting the future creation of this •word and the value of these sensations.) Here is his account, with his commentary:

In our childhood we had often seen, in our family, a lady about forty years old, who was named Madame de Saulce. Her husband was a rich planter in Santo Domingo. Both of them had come live in France at the time of the Revolution. Monsieur de Saulce made many trips to the islands, during which he left his wife in Paris. Madame de Saulce was a very good woman, quite simple, not at all nervous, having no belief in those foolish imaginings that affect us. During her husband's last trip she was at a gathering one evening where she was playing a game of cards. All at once she cried out, falling back in her seat, "Monsieur de Saulce is dead!" Every one hastened to her and pointed out that such a vision must certainly he false, and her reason once more resumed control. Nevertheless, when she was alone, she could not entirely shake off the presentiment that stifled her, and she waited for news of her husband with fearful anxiety. She received reassuring letters, but their date preceded the day of her vision. Finally a letter came from Santo Domingo, sealed in black, a letter that was not addressed in Monsieur de Saulce's handwriting. The letter was from another planter and sent to a third person, to lessen the violence of the shock: Monsieur de Saulce was dead, murdered by negroes on the very day on which Madame de Saulce had received the terrible blow. This double event, attested by more than twenty persons of good standing in the community, was one of those which most impressed me during my early years. Ten years had passed since then, when we saw Madame de Saulce again, still dressed in the eternal mourning to which she had vowed herself.

The narrator adds:

What can we say about such happenings? Nothing can prove their reality or their falsity; we must believe or not believe. Nevertheless, we can apply to them the conclusions drawn from similar examples, which such an authority as Sully has put beyond all doubt. "It is only too certain," wrote Sully in his Memoirs, "that Henry IV had a presentiment of his cruel destiny. The more closely he saw the moment of the coronation approaching, the more he felt fright and horror redouble in his heart. He would come and unfold it all to me, in that state of bitterness and despondency for which I used to blame him as for an unpardonable weakness. His own words will make a quite different impression from anything that I could say. 'Ah! my friend,' he said, 'how this coronation displeases me! I do not know what it is, but my heart tells me that some misfortune will come to me.' He would sit down as he said these words, and give himself up to all the blackness of his thoughts, tapping his fingers on the case of his spectacles and musing profoundly."

Sully's declaration alone would be enough to keep us from doubting the presentiment which made Henry IV feel in his heart the point of the dagger which was to kill him; we can, however, support it by other authorities, almost equally reliable. L'Estoile and Bassom-pierre, in their Memoirs, report the same incidents. Let us hasten, nevertheless, to add that the rare examples of justified presentiments ought to be received only as exceptions.[13]

Such is the tale of Gratien de Semur, and we feel that he published it reluctantly. His recollections have their place in this book. He is more disposed to deny everything than to accept anything. These two extremes are false. Reason invites us to follow an independent path, at an equal distance from the two usual human errors.

[13] Erreurs et prejuges, p. 137

Here are still other observations, no less curious:

Professor Gregory of Edinburgh had visited a friend in a city thirty miles distant, and had there met a lady who had been hypnotized by this friend, and who was unknown to Professor Gregory. He found that she described all the details of his house with striking precision. The idea then came to Gregory to make the following experiment:

He asked her to go to Greenock, about forty-five miles away, where his son was. She saw and described him exactly even though she had never seen him nor heard him spoken of, and she described the cottage where he was busy playing with a dog. This dog, she said, was a very young Newfoundland, black, with white spots. The boy and the dog seemed to be having a very good time together and the dog stole his hat. There was a gentleman there reading a book, not very old but with white hair, a Presbyterian clergyman. As Gregory asked the medium to go into the house, she described the drawing-room, the dining-room, the kitchen, where a young servant was preparing dinner and a leg of mutton was roasting over there but was not yet done. There was also another servant. The gentleman came to the door, the boy continued to play with the dog, and then ran to the kitchen, which was on the upper story of the summer house, and began to eat.

The professor immediately wrote down all the details he had received and sent them to his friend, who recognized most of them as correct. There could not have been, he noticed, any transmission of thought, as he was not familiar with the place where his son was and where the hypnotized woman had been sent.[14]

Many observations similar to the preceding ones are here on my worktable. But we must know where to stop. The result of this research is the affirmation that the human being can see without eyes, with the spirit.

[14] Hyslop, Enigmas of Phychical Research, p. 278.

But I will confess that, in admitting this transcendent sight, I am in disagreement with scholars whom I have known personally and sincerely esteemed, among others Alfred Maury, of the Institute (see my Memoirs). He does not admit this faculty; he believes in a hypersensitiveness of the sense of sight, which has been verified by him in somnambulists,[15] and which does indeed exist, but which we cannot generalize about and which does not at all apply here.

In certain cases we can assuredly compare this function of the sight to the visual power of the nocturnal animals, which see very well in the dark, such as cats, owls, screech-Owls, moths, the reptiles that live in caverns, the deep-sea ashes, etc.

Light has its degrees and seems never to descend to zero.

Certain men are nyctalopes.

Such was the Emperor Tiberius. When he chanced to awake during the night, he could make out all the objects in his chamber; his eyes were very large: “Erat praegrandibus oculis,” we read in Suetonius, “qui cum mirum est, noctu etiam et in tenebris viderent; ab breve et cum a somno potuissent deinde nebescebant”

The Abbe Mussaud, a professor at the college of La Rochelle in 1820, author of a curious little book called “Roman I’optique,” reports that he knew a lady in that city whose eyes had this quality and who could see quite well in the darkness, not merely for a few moments, as Tiberius did, but for a long time, distinguishing even a pin on the ground. Her eyes also were very large. Nevertheless, this visual power was not permanent, and showed only at certain periods of suffering and languor.

On January 3, 1899, when I was dining with my friend Bartholdi, the great sculptor, the daughter of Dr. Chaillou, Madame Peytal, told me that her cousin Mademoiselle Varanne was gifted with this faculty. They heard her reading aloud one night. and discovered her sitting on her bed, without a light, reading a pamphlet by Paul-Louis Courier, which she had taken from the doctor’s library. She was a somnambulist.

[15] Le Sommeil et les Reves (1878), p. 205

I could name from among my scientific correspondents a learned and distinguished lady, gifted with extraordinary psychic powers—Madame d'Esperance, a. member of the Astronomical Society of France—who, in addition to these qualities, sees, writes, and draws in total darkness. At the time of her classical studies, when she was a young girl, she had written a composition during the night, in a state of somnambulism, without suspecting it.[16] Her colleague and friend, Madame Hoemmerle, the translator of Carl du Prel, knew of more than one similar example.

Dr. Liebault, who has dealt rather thoroughly with this question in his learned work on "Le sommeil provoque et lea etats analogues" seems to admit only a hypersensitiveness of the organ of sight, and quotes on this subject some experiments made by himself—as well as by A. Bertrand, Encontre, Macario, Archambauit, Mesnet, —upon somnambulists who read in the dark, thanks to the dilation of the pupil of the eye and the accumulation of the power of attention in the optic nerve. This power of seeing at night is unlimited, but it applies to only a small part of our problem; it does not apply to the description either of a house far away, or of a scene taking place a thousand kilometers distant, or to reading in a closed book, or to the greater part of our examples.

The hypnotized subjects who see without eyes and imagine that they see with their foreheads, with the epigastrium, or with a foot, are under an illusion: it is their spirit which sees.

They sometimes also pretend to see with the ear. Lombroso relates that in 1892 he had to struggle, in his medical practice, with a phenomenon that he had never met with before. He writes:

I had under my care the daughter of a high official of my native city; this person was often seized, at the age of puberty, with a violent attack of hysteria, accompanied by symptoms which neither pathology nor physiology could explain. At times her eyes lost the power of seeing; on the other hand, the invalid saw with her ears. With her eyes bandaged, she was able to read several lines of print that were held to her ears. When we placed a magnifying glass between her ear and the sun she felt what resembled a burn on her eyes and cried out that we wished to

[16] See her work, Au Pays de l'Ombre, p.63

blind her. She prophesied, in particular, with mathematical exactitude, everything that was going to happen to her. She said once that in a month and three days she would feel an irresistible desire to bite. I watched over her, tried to distract her, and put all the clocks in the house behind time in order to deceive her about the hour, and despite that, at the appointed day and hour, she was seized with the desire to bite, and did not grow calm until she had shredded with her teeth several kilograms of paper.

Although these facts were not new, they were nonetheless singular, and inexplicable by any of the established physiological and pathological theories.

We have good reason to say that the new world that we are exploring here is even more surprising than that of Christopher Columbus! As for seeing by means of the ear, it seems to me that that is an essentially psychic phenomenon, to which the acoustic nerve is as foreign as the optic nerve.

Why should it be the forehead, the nose, the chin, the stomach, the navel, the leg, or the foot with which they saw rather than their mental being, gifted with an inner organ, a sort of organ of actual dream! The X-rays pass through the body. Place yourself entirely clothed before the radiographic screen and your skeleton will appear on the screen.

What is this inner faculty? Can we attribute it to the brain? Or ought we to see in it a faculty of the soul, independent of organic anatomy? Let us ask the question again.

The brain is undeniably associated with all our thoughts. The sentiment of the purest truth, the spirit of sacrifice, complete abnegation, mystic adoration of the divinity, —all that we can imagine as most detached from the material, — become thought only by means of the human being and the help of the brain. But the brain is not the author of these thoughts: it is only the instrument. If I wish to lift my arm, if I wish to take an oath, if I deliberate, it is my spirit that acts. The cause of the action is in it and not in the nervous and muscular system that obeys it automatically. It is our spirit which thinks, wills, seeks, loves, decides. It is not our molecular cerebral system.

Mental vision takes place by means of the spirit, of the soul. The faculties at work here are still unknown to us. I supposed at first that the brain might be the cause of all these phenomena, that it emitted invisible waves which were transmitted at a distance, and that these manifestations did not prove the individual existence of our mental being. But this hypothesis is entirely insufficient, for the personal action of the spirit is clearly revealed in this analysis.

We have stated above that many experimenters, and not the least of them, attribute this supra-normal faculty of reading a hidden text to a foreign spirit that communicates with the experimenter through the medium. This is not inadmissible. But it is going far afield after an explanation, it is putting off the difficulty; and what would be the nature of the unknown spirit?

As many of my readers know, I have outlined this same hypothesis in several of my works, —merely as a hypothesis, of course, for it is far from having been proved. It is against the principles of scientific method to create more or less imaginary explanations. It tries to remain always in the sphere of what is known. But it is forced to declare itself inadequate before incomprehensible events, and after having substituted the physiological theory of hallucinations for a complete denial of the phenomena, it finds it is still unsatisfied, and is obliged to seek for something else.

It seems, however, that our own spirit, such as we know it, does not always offer a truly satisfactory explanation, and that occult forces may be concerned.

My different works have established, by a positive train of reasoning, generally accepted, that the universe is a dynamism and that the atoms are regulated by immaterial forces.

Frank Podmore, a well-known psychic author of whom we have already spoken, is convinced that all these phenomena, including apparitions, are explained by the transmission of thought, and refers them all to this theory. I confess that for my part I cannot see any transmission of thought in the act of the seminarist of Bordeaux, writing his sermon in total darkness and with his eyes masked by a screen; or in the somnambulist describing an internal malady and seeing, from a closed

chamber, the details of the dissection of her mother's body; or in Alexis, reading the cards before they had been turned and playing, in spite of a tight bandage, games which he always won; or in a medium following a thief from Paris to Brussels and to Spa; or in the experience of Stainton Moses writing out a sentence taken from a book with which he was not familiar; or in that of Crookes with the unknown word that was divined, etc.

We are very far from knowing everything. We do not pretend to explain everything. "Know thyself," said Socrates. This ought still to be our motto. We do not know our inner selves any better than we did two or three thousand years ago.

But our soul does not seem so simple as we are taught. Polypsychism is not a vain word. What are the divisions of the personality! What are the unconscious, the subconscious, the subliminal?

A rather ancient and indisputable example of vision at a distance, certified by a great number of witnesses, whose assertions have been discussed at length, is offered us by the historian Philostratus, in his life of Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of Jesus Christ. When he was at Ephesus he saw, with his inner vision, the assassination of the Emperor Domitian at Rome.

We know how this extravagant and bloody tyrant died. It was his own best-loved freedmen, who decided with his wife, the Empress Domitia Longina, that lie was as dangerous in his friendships as in his hates, and murdered him in his own home. The vision of Apollonius took place at the very moment when the tragic attack was being made. Here is the astonishingly circumstantial account given. Philostratus tells us:

It was at noon. Apollonius happened to be in one of those little parks on the outskirts of Ephesus, speaking on grave philosophical subjects before hundreds of listeners. At a certain moment his voice dropped as if he had been seized by a sudden and profound emotion. Nevertheless lie continued his discourse, but more slowly, visibly troubled by the rush of ideas that were turning his mind from those with which he was occupied. Then he stopped completely, words seemed to fail him, as with a man who seeks to see the issue of an event. Finally he cried out:

“Be of good courage, Ephesians! The tyrant has been killed today. What am I saying! Today! By Minerva! he has just been killed at this very instant when I stopped speaking.” The Ephesians thought that Apollonius had lost his mind, they wished ardently that he might have spoken the truth, but they feared lest some danger might come to them from this speech. “I am surprised,” said Apollonius, “if you do not yet believe me: Rome herself does, not yet know all about it. But now she is learning of it; the news spreads; already thousands of men know it. It makes twice that number of men —four times as many—the whole people wild with joy. The noise of it will come even here. You need not believe me until the moment when you are informed of the event, and put off, until then, the sacrifice you should offer the gods on this occasion; as for me, I am going to render thanks to them for what I have seen.”

The Ephesians remained incredulous; but soon messengers arrived to announce the good news and bear witness to the correct divination of Apollonius, for the murder of the tyrant, the day on which it had occurred, the hour of noun, all these details agreed perfectly with those which the gods had shown him the day of his discourse to the Ephesians.

Thus speaks Philostratus.

At this period no more was necessary to cause Apollonius to pass for a demigod. Moreover, when Pope Pius V was made a saint, the same “miracle” was attributed to him—that is, the sight from a window of the Vatican of the Battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571, and his exclamation to those around him: “Let us go to the altar to give thanks to God; our army has just won a great victory.”

History is full of these examples of second sight. Comines, the chronicler of Louis XI, reports that at the hour when Charles the Brave was killed at the Battle of Nancy the king was hearing mass in the church of St. Martin of Tours, and that the king’s chaplain, Angelo Cato, later Archbishop of Vienna, said to him, while giving him the pax to kiss: “God gives you peace: your enemy, the Duke of Bourgogne, has just been killed and his army is in flight.”

These tales of Apollonius, of Pius V, of Comines and of a hundred others, have suffered the fate of all human things. In the eighteenth century people quite simply denied them. In the nineteenth they were merely hallucinations. Today, after all the facts have been brought together, it is impossible for us to refuse to admit this vision at a distance, since we know with certainty of a great number of similar cases.

These events are more ancient and more numerous than we think. But we are generally ignorant of them.

Thoughts travel across space. How! Emission, or waves! From the sun to the earth there circulate the electric particles, flung out from the central star, which produce here the phenomena of magnetism, of the aurora borealis, of telephonic disturbances. They are emissions. A flung projectile carries with it a certain energy. The transmission of sound-waves through the atmosphere, or of light-waves through the ether, waves which in themselves are neither sonorous nor luminous, come from a source of energy. How is gravity transmitted through space? This force is prodigious: with its hands it upholds all the worlds: the earth which weighs five septillions, nine hundred and ninety sextillions of tons; Jupiter, three thousand times larger; the sun, three hundred thousand times heavier than our globe; all the stars, each one of which is a sun. From the greatest to the smallest these worlds act and react upon one another, and Sirius, at eighty-three thousand millions of kilometers from here, exercises a distant influence upon our planet itself. What is the nature of this physical telepathy! Waves of gravitation do not exist. It is possible that thought has no common measure with matter, space, and time, of which, after all, we can have no precise idea. Our brain cells bathe in the unknown; we are unconsciously related to all that exists, to all natural forces, known and unknown, by an inextricable network of waves and vibrations, and thought itself is an agent acting through space.

In these accounts there is no imagination, nor illusion, nor trickery. They are as exact as a meteorological or an astronomical observation. These studies have the rights of citizenship in science.

Our spiritual being, our mental being can see without the eyes of the body. I have brought these accounts together, during many years, in order to be convinced myself, and as I suppose that my readers are as

hard to satisfy as I am, I continue to lay before them the result of my researches.

We have only an embarrassment of choices among these reports, which are as varied as they are undeniable. Here is one more that I should regret not to include, as a no less convincing proof of our argument. This "mental vision" was published by Dr. Fanton, of Cannet, Maritime Alps, in the "Annales des Sciences psychiques" for the month of December, 1910. It concerns a young woman, passionately devoted to dancing, who after various occurrences, became abominably hysterical, entirely shameless, and seriously ill. She lived at Marseilles and her husband was at Geneva. Here is the incident:

Dr. Fanton, who was caring for her (October, 1885), received a telegram from her husband saying that he was leaving Geneva that very evening by the seven o'clock train, which ought to pass Culoz at nine, reach Lyons at ten, and Marseilles the next day toward five o'clock. On the envelop of the telegram one could make out the words "Minister of War," although they were partly covered by a spot of ink.

It was seven in the evening when the doctor was called by the patient's family for a violent crisis. However, he did not hurry about answering, and took the time to eat his evening meal, in the course of which, he said, they served him an omelette aux lines herbes.

His patient's home was about three hundred and fifty meters from his own. "On my arrival," he said, "I saw eight persons about the invalid who were witnesses of the following events and of whom Six are still living."

She had just said to them: "He doesn't hurry about coming. At last, he is making up his mind." And a little later, "He is at the door, he is ringing." At once the bell sounded. On my entry into the room the sick woman received me with a great burst of laughter and addressed me thus: "Ah! you don't hurry when I send for you! You send word that you are not at home, and yet you have supper and eat an omelette aux fines herbes."

She continued: "It is useless for you to seek excuses. I know what you were doing. You had better give me that telegram from Alfred which

you have with you; he might as easily have sent it to me." At the end of a moment the sick woman repeated in a loud and very intelligible voice the whole of the telegram which was still lying at the bottom of my pocket and of which no one but myself knew among those present. This scene took place with such rapidity that I was completely taken aback by it, and the witnesses themselves were so thunderstruck that I was a moment in recovering myself before telling those present that what the patient said was correct and showing them the telegram which I had received half an hour before.

How was Madame A— able to know the contents of that telegram, when she had not been warned of her husband's return and still less of the hours and itinerary of his journey! That is what we attempted to explain, without being able to do so. All at once a new outburst of laughter, still louder and gayer, broke from the invalid, interrupted by these words: "He is sleeping, he is staying in the train. He will not get here. No! No!" Then the laughter passed into suffocation and ended in a stammering, in which we made out, quite clearly: "He is asleep, he is staying on the train, he will not get here." It was then nine o'clock.

In the morning, at about the hour when the train was due which was to bring her husband, I went to meet him with two of our friends. I especially urged all those who remained with the invalid to notice very exactly and in the smallest detail, all that might happen during our absence, and in the same way we others proposed to notice all our acts and gestures. The husband was not on the train from Lyons and we returned to my patient.

A little after our departure a telegram had come from Grenoble saying that the husband would not arrive until the afternoon, as he had missed the train.

I left her at about eleven o'clock.

In the afternoon I went to meet her husband; before he had seen any one, and without letting him suspect anything, I questioned him. I learned from his own words that at nine in the evening he had passed through Culoz, without awakening, in a car for Chambery, and that he had awakened in the latter town. When he found he would reach Marseilles seven hours late, because of this change in his journey, lie

had telegraphed. I made him repeat this tale in the presence of several persons who had watched with his wife the night before, and we were able to prove, by the tale we told him in our turn, that she had followed him during his trip, the vicissitudes of which she had described to us.

At that time Dr. Fanton was not familiar with the subject that we are studying here and was veritably thunderstruck. We know, today, that this power of the soul is undeniable: we can see by means of the spirit, not only by means of the optic nerve or the retina.

Let us also listen to Dr. Osty, concerning certain facts recently studied by him:

In February, 1914. Madame Camille, who was exercising the profession of a medium at Nancy, gave, during a hypnotic sleep, indications which resulted in the recovery of the body of Monsieur Cadiou, who had been missing since December 30th, without there having been, until then, the least hint as to the cause of his disappearance. There was at once a great noise in the papers. Police and magistrates could not conceal their annoyance. The "strong minded," the shrewd, those whose superior intelligence shone in their expressions, did not hesitate an instant to accuse the somnambulist of being an accomplice, paid by those interested to mislead justice.

Professor Bernheim, interviewed by a reporter of the "Matin," declared that divination did not exist. "I have never been able to establish," he said, "in the course of my long career, phenomena of vision at a distance or of divination; all my scientific education revolts against the existence of such phenomena and until there is serious verification I shall contest the truth of them."

Nevertheless, nothing was more certain than this hypnotic revelation.[17]

[17] It happens that the case is decided on the day on which I am correcting this proof (October 29, 1919).

A month later, on March 19, 1914, Monsieur Andre Rifaut, the caretaker of the chateau of Boursault, disappeared. Men ransacked the woods and the lakes formed by the overflowing of the Maine. The police and a company of the Rheinis militia made an active search, but the judicial inquiry remained without results.

Then the brothers Rifaut did as the Cadiou family had done and had recourse to several mediums, who, with one accord, declared that the caretaker had been murdered and thrown into the water. Madame Camille, who was one of the three, spoke thus, on March 24th, according to the "Journal":

"You are seeking for a relative. I see him. After having exchanged some papers with a man clad in a uniform, he goes on into the night along a deserted road. There is a river a little farther on. He approaches his home. A man comes up and strikes him on the back of his head with a club. The unfortunate man falls, stunned. His murderer picks him up and goes to throw him in the river. I see his body. It will be found in a few days, far from this spot."

On April 12th, the body. of Monsieur Rifaut was picked up by some fishermen, who found it floating down the current at Jaulgonne, Aisne. Dr. Petit, the coroner, formally decided there had been death by violence. According to his evidence, the caretaker of the chateau of Boursault had been struck down, the skull had been driven in, and the unfortunate man was dead before he was thrown into the water.[18]

The following fact is perhaps even more striking:

On March 1, 1914, Dr. Osty received a letter that told him that in the little commune of Cher, an old man of eighty-two, Monsieur Etienne Lerasle, had disappeared and that all search for him had been vain. Madame Morel, who lived in Paris and was possessed of second sight (I myself have had occasion to consult her), to whom the doctor had brought a silk

[18] Annales des Sciences psychiques, April, 1914

handkerchief that had belonged to Monsieur Lerasle, followed the walk he had taken through a wood and saw him stretched out dead on the ground, having stopped, worn out, and, in fact, determined to die. It was the second of March. For fifteen days his family and the village people—eighty men—on the demand of the mayor had explored the forest without finding anything. From the detailed directions of the medium, they followed the paths described by her and reached the corpse in the attitude in which she had seen it: she had followed him as far as that, tapping with his cane, as was his habit, and stretching himself out near a great tree and a brook, never to rise again.[19] Madame Morel had never heard either of this good man or of this country about Cher; her psychic power—which we mention here as one of the proofs of the existence of our mental element, independent of the physical organism—was able to reach the old man leaving his home, see the past, and feel the future. All this was not shut up in the fold of the silk handkerchief, assuredly, but the handkerchief served to establish a communication between the medium and the man to be discovered. There is here neither telepathy nor transmission of thought: no one knew anything. There was vision at a distance, without eyes, as in all the examples mentioned in this chapter.

These are facts of observation that we cannot confound with the usual banalities of the “extra-lucid seers” and the fortune-tellers by cards. Let us exclude nothing and examine everything. We see without eyes. Cryptoscopy ought to be admitted as a new branch of the tree of science.

Is it known that a blind person can see, read, draw, paint? here is an example observed in 1849 at the village of Saint-Laurent-sur-Sevres, Maine-et-Loire, by a doctor who names his witnesses:

A doctor of the neighborhood had gone to visit two convents in this village, one of men and one of women. “We were received,” he writes, “in the most cordial manner by Father Dallain, the Superior of the former, who also had authority over the second. After we had walked

[19] For all the details, including the plan of the wood and of the walk, see the Annales des Sciences psychiques of April, 1914. See also the very competent works of Monsieur Duchatel on psychometry

about in the two convents, he said to us: 'I now wish to show you, gentlemen, one of the most curious things in the ladies' convent.' And he had an album brought in in which we admired some very perfect watercolors. There were birds, landscapes, and marines. These very successful drawings,' he said, 'have been made by one of our young nuns who is blind.' And this is what he told us about a charming bunch of roses, one bud of which was blue. 'Some time ago, in the presence of the Marquis of La Rochejaquelein and several other visitors, I called in the blind nun and asked her to sit down at a table and draw something. We spread out colors for her and gave her pencils, brushes, paper, and she at once began on the bouquet which you see. While she was working they several times placed an opaque body, cardboard or board, between her eyes and the paper and the brush continued to move with the same regularity. To the observation that the bunch was a little slim, she replied: "Very well, I will make a bud come out from the joint of this branch." While she was working at this correction some one replaced the carmine with the blue; and she did not notice the change, and that is why you see a blue bud.'

"The Abbe Dallain," adds the narrator, "was as remarkable for his science and his fine intelligence as for his great piety, and I have never met any one who has inspired more affection and veneration."[20]

From the language of the blind young woman, it is certain that she saw; otherwise she would never have said: "I am going to make a bud grow from the joint of this branch." But what is no less certain is that she did not see with her eyes, for she continued her work despite the obstacle that was placed before it. She saw with the sight of the soul, as the sight of the body had been taken away. After all, the somnambulists see in this way; why should not a blind person see, in a similar condition? Was she not in a state of awakened somnambulism?

As for the color blue, put in the place of the red, she may have been thinking only of the position of the bud or may not have noticed it, or may not have seen it as color.

[20] Revue spirite (1864), p. 72

In the face of all these facts we can no longer deny .the possibility, for the human organism, of sight without eyes, through opaque bodies, as well as through time and space.[21]

Those who deny this really make us laugh when they state learnedly that there is nothing here but illusion, error, mystification, hallucinations, and other nonsense; that they know the laws of nature and that the universe does not hide anything from them; that the soul does not exist; that there is no spirit either in man or in the cosmos; and that everything is explained by matter and its properties.

These are very simple-minded “reasoners.”

The cases reported in this chapter on sight without eyes, by means of the spirit, are as certain as astronomical, meteorological, physical, geological, and anthropological observations, and others of which the most exacting science is composed; as certain and as irrefutable as the psychic or spiritual phenomena, or those procured through mediums, which have been carefully observed and registered by photography,[22] although these require a particularly careful attention, as they are not in accord with our present ideas on physics, weight, and human physiology.

But what forces are in action? Incontestably, indisputably, there is something there, and something transcendent, outside our little, ordinary life of flesh and blood, of muscles and nerves.

Our corporeal, material existence can disintegrate, without bringing about the destruction of this psychic element, which is independent of it. This is a scientifically admissible possibility. What does appear altogether extraordinary, is that the events reported here have been observed for many long years, for centuries, without any one’s taking any account of them, that the reality of the soul’s existence was positively established in 1819, by the Abbe Faria, through these same phenomena, in his book on “La Cause du Soimmeil lucide,” and yet that only now do

[21] We can find no less characteristic events in Les Forces naturelles inconnues, especially on pages 510, 515, 517, 518. The progress of science has suppressed the paradox of vision through opaque bodies, by the discovery of the Roentgen rays, a fact that ought to be instructive to impenitent unbelievers

[22] See Les Forces naturelles inconnues

we seem to be making these discoveries! Do well-informed men continue to be in a very small minority?

The vision of the future, the knowledge of future events, is going to furnish us with a demonstration even more irrefutable than all that has preceded it.

CHAPTER 8. THE SIGHT OF FUTURE EVENTS; THE PRESENT FUTURE; THE ALREADY SEEN

A presumptuous skepticism that rejects facts, without examining them to see if they are real, is more blameworthy in certain respects than an irrational credulity.

A. Von Humboldt.

AMONG the unknown faculties of the soul that we ought to study if we desire to create an experimental psychology founded on facts of positive observation I wish to speak now of that which permits us to see the future, to see what does not yet exist!

In the same way in which the soul sees across space it sees across time.

I have written a book (not yet printed) on this subject, La Vue de l'avenir," —genuine premonitions, authentically established, premonitive dreams, events foreseen with a great accuracy of detail, the conflict between the vision of the future and human liberty, between determinism and free will. My intention is not to expatiate on this vast subject, but as we are concerned with proving the special faculties of the soul, it is a good opportunity to add to the preceding accounts of "mental vision" those which follow and which are no less worthy of attention. Especially noteworthy is what is called "the already seen," a phenomenon very much disputed, very much discussed, but incontestable in the opinion of those who have studied the question and have had time to examine the accounts carefully.

Future events can undoubtedly he seen in advance, and with great exactness.

We shall here approach this grave question not by metaphysical considerations but by the experimental method.

My attention was first called to this phenomenon in the spring of 1870, by the account which we are going to read of an observation made by a person endowed with a clear and judicious mind, the Princess Emma

Carolath, who, being very fond of France, used to come to Paris every year and liked to talk with me about these great problems. The unexpected war between France and Germany touched her quick sensibility and the young woman barely survived this international disaster—a preface to the cataclysm of 1914. This letter is one of the last that I received from her, and the premonitory dream is remarkably explicit. I have already spoken of it in my work "L'Inconnu"; it dates from about twelve years before 1870. Here it is, somewhat abridged:

I had just fallen asleep, very anxious over the health of some one I loved, when I found myself carried in a dream to an unknown castle, into an octagonal cabinet hung in red damask. There was a bed in which lay sleeping the person whose health disturbed me. A lamp, hanging from the arch of the canopy, flooded with light the pale but smiling face, framed in thick masses of black hair. At the bed's head was a picture, the subject of which was so strangely engraved on my memory that on my awakening I could have drawn it: it was a Christ crowned with roses by a heavenly spirit, with verses by Schiller, which I read.

Two years later we went for a country visit to a castle in the depths of Hungary. I stopped, trembling, when I entered the apartment which had been set aside for us: I was in the octagonal cabinet, hung in red damask, before the bed and before the picture of Christ crowned with roses, with the verses of Schiller. This picture had never been copied or reproduced, and it was impossible that I should have seen it otherwise than in the dream—any more, for that matter, than I could have seen the octagonal cabinet.

Emma, Princess Carolath, Weisbaden: March 5, 1870.

Since this already far-away period of 1870 my attention has often been called to this sort of event, which I have been led to examine with particular care. The work that I am today laying before the reader, therefore, represents almost fifty years of varied observations, and I present it with all the confidence that this slow elaboration justifies.

One can object to this dream, as to other similar ones, that it was not written down and dated by a canceled postage-stamp before its verification, —which would assuredly have been absolute proof, —and that in the mind of the narrator it might have been made to conform to the incident as observed, so that her so-called verification would be fallacious. But this objection has scarcely any value, as, contrariwise, it was this unexpected verification which struck the observer.

We attach no importance to these dreams unless they are realized, and we do not take the precaution to write them down in advance. It can also be objected that we see in dreams many scenes and countries which we never actually see again; that we see only coincidences which have occurred more or less by chance, and that for one coincidence which appears there are a thousand which do not come to pass. To suppose that at sight of a room, a house, a landscape, a sort of sudden and fugitive dream may traverse the brain and give the impression of the already seen, is another hypothesis and explanations have been proposed for such apparent exteriorizations. Further on we will discuss the objections and we will examine all the explanations. For the present, let us note that there are different sorts of physiological dreams, and that we are concerned here not with more or less vague dreams, but with precise visions that strike the attention enough to be retained in all their details. But let us not discuss it just now. Let us bring forward the facts. The impartial reader will be the best judge. Our duty is to establish the facts liberally and with no preconceived idea. Hypotheses do not constitute science: it is observations that do so, in the psychic sciences as well as in the physical and natural sciences.

I do not wish to reconsider here the numerous examples (195) published in “L’Inconnu,” showing so clearly a vision of the future. But since that time (1899) I have received a great number of others that may interest readers who are concerned about the same problems.

The already seen forms a part of the still unexplained phenomena of the vision of the future that we will study in this chapter as a function of the soul, substantiating its intrinsic reality.

Generally this impression of the already seen is considered an illusion; it has been called “false recognition,” “perversion of memory,” “paramnesia,” “ancestral memory,” and other hypothetical names. I

invite seekers after truth to meditate on the following assemblage of carefully made observations.

And first of all, there is this one, which alone would suffice to prove the reality of which we have spoken.

The already seen, clearly and literally presented by premonitory dreams, is a fact that cannot be denied, however inexplicable it may still be in the present state of our psychology. Here, for example, is an honest and irrefutable account, by Canon Gamier, a worthy priest of the diocese of Langres,[1] and former professor at the little seminary where, as we shall see, an event of this sort occurred which it is impossible to doubt.

It was in 1846, during the second year of my work in the upper seminary. One night I traveled in spirit during my sleep. The road which I followed—white, smooth, and sparsely bordered with trees—seemed to descend the side of a mountain, by a gentle slope, and reach a plain that stretched away out of sight. The sun was sinking toward the horizon, as it was between four and five in the afternoon, and shed its peaceful light over the country-side, with delicate shadings of color and shadow that are easier to imagine than to describe.

I found that I had suddenly stopped short, without knowing how or why, at a spot where another road cut at right angles that which I was following. For all that, there was nothing unusual about it that could have caught the eye of the traveler, nor even attracted his attention. Nevertheless, I still see myself standing there, straight as a statue, contemplating with especial satisfaction nothing much—one of those country scenes which we see every day.

To the left, I noticed, the road crossed mine and passed around the mountain, where, consequently, there had been built a little wall about a meter high which ran along the road, to sustain the earth.

Along this wall were planted three large trees that threw a dense shade.

About thirty feet from the spot where I was standing, opposite me, in a well-leveled court, there rose, close to the road, a charming little house,

[1] Where I studied Latin from eleven to fourteen years of age. See my memoirs

white as chalk and bathed in sunshine. The only window, which faced the road, was open: behind the window sat a woman well but simply dressed. Red predominated among the bright colors of her clothes. On her head was a white cap of some very light material with openwork embroidery, of a form that was unknown to me. This woman seemed about thirty years old.

Standing before her was a young girl of ten or twelve years, whom I took to be her own. She was attentively watching her mother, who was knitting and showing her how it was done: she was barefoot, her hair down her back, and was dressed somewhat like the mother. By the side of the young girl were three children rolling on the ground: a small boy who might have been four or five years old was on his knees, showing something to his two little brothers, smaller than he, to amuse them; these were flat on their backs before the eldest, and all three were absorbed in their admiration. The two women had given me a rapid glance when they saw me standing there and looking at them, but they had not stirred. Evidently they often saw travelers passing.

A large dog stretched his length beside them and scratched himself from time to time, to put the fleas to rout.

Through the wide-open door I saw three men seated on benches about a table, two on one side and one on the other, at the very back of the room, playing and drinking. They looked like workmen employed in the neighborhood. They wore the linen apron and the pointed hat of the Abruzzi.

On the other side, at the right, three sheep were browsing on the unappetizing grass; occasionally they butted one another in a friendly way. To the side two homes, one bay and the other one white, were fastened to the wall. A pretty little colt wandered here and there to amuse himself, and went toward the table of the players, without doubt to take a lesson and to brush their hair with his nose. The young innocent received a good cuff as his reward.

I also noticed four or five hens and a fine cock with a magnificent tail, the sort of cock whose green-and-black plumes decorate the caps of the Italian mountaineers. These poor fowls were seeking their pittance in

the court, where the grass, dried by the sun, hardly covered the white dust.

Such was the simple country scene that I was watching, in complete content, for the space of ten minutes perhaps, and which disappeared suddenly as it had come. Before, I had seen nothing; afterward I saw nothing, and I believed it drowned in the flood of forgetfulness for all eternity.

This is how it came once more to life, and was stamped forever on my memory and imagination.

I still see this little corner of the earth, as I see the clock tower of my village.

In 1849 I, with two friends, took a trip into Italy.

Arrival at Marseilles, a step to Genoa, a brief call at Leghorn, Siena, Florence, then a quick advance upon Rome.

We pass through a hamlet in the Apennines. A good coach receives our august persons. Four or five horses draw the coach, and set off like lightning, with a great ringing of their thousand little bells; the vetturino, or postilion, wearing an African helmet, or rather harlequin hat, cracks the whip eternally, —as though he would throw his arm out of joint! — brings all the curious into the street, and exhibits his prowess to the eyes of the multitude. There is not time enough to admire our Lordships; our carriage does not run, it flies.

But after leaving the city all ardor disappears, we sink into a dead calm, we reach the crest of the mountain. There is a halt of five minutes; four proud coursers replace our Rosinantes; whip up, coachman! —our carriage flies along with the dust, we descend like a storm, recommending our souls to God. (There was good reason, for I am yet unable to imagine how we ever managed to find ourselves still whole and with all our limbs after so mad a ride.)

Finally the carriage slows down to a reasonable speed and arrives at a relay station without mishap.

During this stop, I look out of the carriage door and sweat comes out on me; my heart beats like a tambourine, and I mechanically put my hand

to my face, as if to remove a veil which troubles me and prevents me from seeing: I rub my nose, my eyes, like a sleeper who awakens suddenly after a dream. I really think I am dreaming, and yet my eyes are wide open; I assure myself that I am not mad nor yet the victim of a most singular illusion. Before my eyes is the little country scene that I saw long ago in my dream. Nothing has changed!

The first thought that comes to me, after I get back my wits, is this: I have already seen this. I do not know where, but I am quite sure of it,—that is certain. For all that, I have never been here, as this is the first time I have been in Italy. How does it happen?

Sure enough, there are the two roads that cross, the little wall which holds the earth up at the side of the court, the trees, the white house, the open window; the mother knitting and her daughter watching her, the three little fellows amusing themselves with the dog, the three workmen, drinking and playing, the colt who goes to take a lesson and receives a cuff, the two horses, the sheep. Nothing is changed: the people are exactly those I saw, as I saw them, doing the same things in the same attitudes, with the same gestures, etc. How is that possible? But the fact is certain, and for fifty years I have wondered. Mystery! First I saw it in a dream; secondly, I saw it in actual reality, three years after.

Abbe Garnier, Canon.

(Letter 901.)

Such is the literal text. I have given it in full, instead of in a summary, for each detail is interesting.

If we admit this account—it seems very difficult to refuse to do so, as the author is not a mere nobody, nor a joker, nor an illusionist—we have before us two recorded facts: first, a dream that occurred under known conditions, in a room of the large seminary of Langres, and secondly, a view of this dream in panorama, three years later.

The psychologists who teach that the already seen is an illusion are in error. The scene observed has really been seen in advance.

Without doubt, in fifty years one can imagine a more complete identification of the two scenes, that of the dream and that of the trip; it happens quite naturally in the mind of the narrator. But the foundation remains. There have indeed been two successive sights, —one in a dream, the other in reality, — and the first had too sharply struck the young abbe for there to be any doubt of it.

This story recalls the premonitory dream at Niort of Saint-Maixent with which my readers are already familiar. Monsieur Groussard, cure of Sainte-Radegonde, when he was in school at Niort at fifteen years of age, dreamed that he was at Saint-Maixent (a town which he did not know by name) with his schoolmaster, in a small square, near a well opposite to which was a pharmacy, and that he saw coming toward him a lady of the neighborhood whom he remembered to have seen once at Niort. This lady accosted him and spoke to him of matters that he found so extraordinary that, as soon as it was morning, he told the patron, as they called the head of the institution. The latter, very much astonished, made him repeat the conversation. A few days later, having business at Saint-Maixent, the patron took the boy with him. No sooner arrived they found themselves in the square seen in the dream, at two points marked on a map which Monsieur Groussard sent me, and saw coming toward them the lady in question, who held with the patron, absolutely word for word, the conversation of which the scholar had told.

These events are more frequent than are often imagined. For my part, I have been told of a great number. Here is one in which an exact sight of the scene to come is shown very clearly:

In June, 1898, 1 was living with an uncle whom I dearly loved. As his health bad become uncertain, we thought we ought to change our apartment for a house with a southern exposure and surrounded by a garden.

The evening before we moved, at eleven o'clock, I was thinking (very wide awake) alone in my room, of the grief I felt in leaving the well-loved apartment, when all at once I saw the garden of our new dwelling as it was at the time, very shady and full of flowers; then it became clearer, it seemed larger, and I saw it as it must appear in

winter. The only verdure left was the green arbor of ivy. And at the same time I saw two undertaker's men, one large and one short, going down the path that led to the street.

This vision, which was very intense, struck me greatly at first, then I thought no more about it in the midst of the cares which my uncle's condition caused me. But seven months later, in January, my uncle died, and the day of his burial, a few minutes before the body was taken away, I saw the undertaker's two men, one large and one small, going down the path in the same spot where my vision had shown them to me.

Be good enough to excuse, dear master, the great liberty I have taken in writing to you and receive my most respectful salutations.

Marie Lebas, 15 rue Corneille, Le Havre. (Letter 920.)

This letter had evidently but one aim, and that quite disinterested—to let me know of a case of vision of the future that was exactly verified. We can imagine that the author foresaw the death of her uncle; but that is all. To have seen what came to pass seven months later, the winter landscape, the two funereal men, is outside the scope of rational normality. This already seen cannot be explained, as people pretend, as a vision at the moment of the event, for the author experienced it one evening in June, 1898, and the event took place in January, 1899.

The evidences of the already seen are very numerous. The following account was sent me by a reader of an article, "La Glane," in "La Nouvelle Mode," for May 26, 1918:

I dreamed that I was on my vacation, at the place where I usually go, but the room which was given me was different from my own and behind a clothes-press I saw spreading flames. A stupid dream, I forgot it.

Six months later I reached my destination. I was led into a very small summerhouse. Although I had never seen it before, I recognized this little corner that was meant for me. The clothespress, in the same spot, recalled the fire. I spoke of it and they reassured me. For ten years no

fire had harmed the neighborhood. I had begun to lose my fear, when, toward the fourth week, the tocsin. sounded. An immense fire consumed a farm not far from my dwelling, made worse by the straw and rubbish, and even licked the wall where the clothespress stood.

Aimee Roge

Once more, these premonitions are neither so exceptional nor so uncertain as is supposed.

In his carefully verified work on “Premonitory Phenomena” the Italian scholar Bozzano reports the following occurrence that is quite typical as regards the “already seen.” The Chevalier Giovanni de Figueroa, one of the best and most renowned fencing-masters of Palermo, relates what happened to himself:

One night in the month of August, in the year 1910, I awoke under the impression of a dream that had been so vivid that I roused my wife and told her immediately all these strange, curious, and precise details.

I was somewhere in the country, on a white and dusty road, by which I was entering a vast cultivated field. In the center of this field there rose a rustic building with a ground floor for shops and stables. To the right of the house I saw a sort of hut formed of armfuls of leaves and dried wood, and there was also a cart, the sides of which were taken down, and on it a harness for a beast of burden.

Then a peasant, whose face has remained sharp and clear in my clad in dark-colored trousers, his head covered with a soft approached me and invited me to follow him, which I did. He led me behind the building, and through a low and narrow door we entered a little stable, four or five square meters, or more, full dirt and manure. In this little stable there was a short stone stairway that turned inward above the entrance door. A mule was fastened to a movable trough and, with his hind-quarters, obstructed the passage by which one reached the first steps of the stairs. The peasant having assured me that the animal was gentle, I made him move and climbed the stairway, at the top of which I

found myself in a little chamber, or attic, with a wooden floor; and I noticed, hanging from the ceiling, winter watermelons, green tomatoes, onions, and green corn.

In this same room, which served as an anteroom, was a group of two women and a little girl. One of these two women was old and the other young; I supposed that the latter was the mother of the child. The features of these three persons also remained engraved on my memory. Through the door that opened into the adjoining chamber I noticed a double bed, very high, such as I had never seen.

That was the dream.

In the following month of October I went to Naples to assist our fellow-citizen, Monsieur Amedeo Brucato, in a duel.

This is not the time to tell of the incidents, the annoyances, and the mishaps that assailed me because of this assistance; I will only say, so far as concerns the dream, that the affair led me into a duel of my own.

This duel took place on October 12th, the day when, with my seconds—Captain Bruno Palamenghi, of the 4th Bersaglieri, in garrison at Naples, and Francesco Busardo—I went to Marano by automobile, where I had never been in my life and which I did not even know existed. I had barely penetrated a few hundred meters into the flat country when I was sharply struck with the road, broad and white with dust, which I recognized as having seen, —but when, or on what occasion? We stopped at the edge of a field which was not unknown to me, because I had already seen it. We got down from the automobile and went into a field to a path bordered with thickets and plants, and I said to Captain Bruno Palamenghi, who was by my side: "I know this spot, this is not the first time I have come here; at the end of the path there ought to be a house; there, at the right, there is a wooden hut." It was, indeed, all there, and also the cart with the lowered sides, containing a harness for a beast of burden.

An instant later a peasant in black trousers, with soft black hat, exactly like him I had seen two months before in my dream, came to invite me to follow him into the house and, instead of following him, I preceded him to the door of the stable, which I already knew, and, on entering, saw the mule fastened to the trough; then I looked at the peasant, to ask

him if the beast was harmless, for his hind quarters prevented me from climbing the little stone stairway, and he assured me, as in the dream, that there was no danger. Having climbed the stairs, I found myself in the attic, where I recognized the watermelons up under the ceiling, the green tomatoes, the onions, the green corn, and, in the little room, in an angle at the right, the old woman, the young one, and the child, as I had seen them in my dream.

In the neighboring chamber, which I had to enter in order to remove my things, I recognized the bed that had so much astonished me in my dream because of its height, and I laid my vest and hat on it.

I had spoken of my dream to several of my friends in the armory, in the fencing-ring, and elsewhere; persons who can all vouch for it:

Captain Palamenghi, the lawyer, Tomasso Forcasi, Monsieur Amedeo Brucato, Count Dentale Diaz, and Monsieur Roberto Giannina of Naples were witnesses to my precise knowledge of the spot and the persons who had their place in the events of the duel.

My word as a man of honor will suffice, I believe, to assure the truth of these things; nevertheless, if it were absolutely necessary to have recourse to the evidence of the witnesses I should have no difficulty in writing one by one to the friends I have named and I am sure they would not fail to respond to my wish.

These are the facts; the interpretation of them concerns the scholars.

Giovanni de Figueroa.

"This episode," writes Bozzano, "is particularly worthy of attention because its authenticity cannot be held in doubt, as the man who told it is a person who knows the value of a word of honor, and the fact that he told about the dream before its realization excludes the hypothesis that the impression of the already seen could be reduced to a trick of the memory."

Bozzano is a spiritualist and is convinced of reincarnation. For him the life of the spirit reconciles these apparent contradictions.

It does not seem to me that the explanation of the mystery has actually been given. It ought still to be studied.

To see something that does not exist, that will not exist except in the future—three years, three months, or three days after; it makes little difference—is inadmissible to all those who are not familiar with our studies, although it may be certain to us. My records on this point are numerous. Here is another:

Monsieur Pletneff, a government official of Tver, Russia, assessor of the college, wrote me in 1899 (Letter 777) that he had seen in a dream his friend Oseroff carried in a coffin surrounded by relatives and friends, that he was ignorant at the time of where Oseroff was living and of what his state of health was, and that “almost the same day” he had died at Victni-Valotchek, a city of the department of Tver.

This same letter states that one of the chancellors of the department of Tver, Monsieur Ivan Sasonoff, very much esteemed by the writer of the letter, was passing one day before a house and saw, while he was entirely awake, a stone stairway on the outside which did not exist. Monsieur Pletneff, having passed there twice on the same day, made quite sure that this exterior stairway really was not there. But on passing by three or four days later he noticed that they had brought white stones and were tearing down the old stairway in order to build a new one.

Therefore, this non-existing stairway was seen before it was built, and the observer passing by there would naturally have been convinced that he had already seen it.

Here is another event no less odd:

Professor Boehm, who used to teach mathematics at Marburg, was spending an evening with friends, when he was seized with the conviction that he ought to return home. As he was peacefully taking his tea, lie resisted this impression, which, however, came back with such force that he was obliged to yield. When he reached home be found everything as he had left it, but he felt himself driven to change the place of his bed; however absurd this mental command seemed to him, he felt that he ought to do it, so he called the servant, and, with his help,

pulled the bed to the other side of the room. When that was done, he felt quite at his ease, and returned to finish the evening with his friends. They separated at ten o'clock; he returned home and went to sleep. He was awakened in the middle of the night by a great noise and discovered that a heavy beam had fallen, carrying with it part of the ceiling, and was lying on the spot which his bed had occupied.

What is the mysterious force that warns us in this way? Yes, I repeat that all this seems inadmissible—to see what does not exist! The scene observed by the Abbe Gamier in 1849 did not exist in 1846, the young woman was three years younger, one of her children was not born; the uncle of Madame Lebas was not in his grave seven months before his death; the scene of the month of October at Marano did not exist in the month of August, etc. But can we deny these facts of observation?

This work had already gone to press when I received the following letter in response to an oral communication that had especially interested me. According to a generally adopted rule I had begged the author to accompany his account with evidence, establishing the priority of his dream to the occurrence itself.

Paris: September 9, 1919.

As I promised you, I am sending you, under this cover, accompanied by two testimonials, the account of the premonitory dream that you showed a desire to publish. I am very happy to send you this exact observation and beg you to accept, etc.

A. Saurel.

In 1911 I dreamed I was in a new countryside, in a land that I felt was unknown to me.

On a little eminence, the gentle slopes of which were covered with fresh meadows, I saw a large building of medieval appearance, half small countryseat, half-fortified farm. High walls, weathered by storms, surrounded the buildings with their unbroken girdle. Four massive towers, not very high, flanked the corners. Before the principal part

and through the meadow there ran a pretty brook, with clear, babbling waters.

Men—soldiers—were fetching water from it. Others were lighting fires not far from stacks of guns ranged along the walls. These men were clad in a curious pale-blue uniform that I did not know, and wore a helmet that seemed to me of a strange shape.

I saw myself clad in the uniform of an officer and giving the orders of the camp.

By one of those odd phenomena that many persons have experienced, I thought, while attending to these affairs: "What an absurd situation! Why am I here and in this costume?

As this dream had left me, on my awakening, with a very clear and precise impression, I did not cease to be interested in the absence of those incoherent or ridiculous details which people our sleep, and by this appearance of harmony and logic in the absurd; for absurd it seemed to me, this situation as officer in an unknown army.

During the day I spoke to those about me of this dream and of the blue soldiers that animated it. Then I thought no more of it.

But the war, which overthrew so many existences, made me, after a series of incarnations, a lieutenant of infantry. My regiment happened to be resting close to the front in the Aube. I was taking forward my recruits of the class of 1919.

The battalion had been marching since early morning. The heat that faded the tender green of the tall rye made itself keenly felt by my poor young greenhorns. The cloud of dust raised on the road by the thousands of weary feet did not permit me to see where we were. I had received the order to camp under the walls of "the chateau," which was, the quartermaster told me, two hundred meters to the right. After having given my orders to the chiefs of section, I went to join the major.

A few minutes later I rejoined my company around the poplar walk that hid the chateau from me.

The countryside that appeared after I had passed the last intervening tree, struck me immediately. It was the same gently sloping meadow,

all gay with the flowers which June scatters everywhere; the walls, the towers—all was exactly like that which I had seen seven years before in my dream. All it lacked were the pretty, noisy brook and the monumental gateway.

As I was noting this difference between the dream and the reality, an adjutant came to ask me where the troop should go to get water. "To the brook," I answered, laughing. The non-commissioned of-fleer looked at me in astonishment. I added: "Yes, if it isn't on this side it must surely be on the other side of the building. Come with me."

When we had rounded the tower at the north corner I saw, without astonishment, the gay brook running over the mossy stones and, toward the middle of the wall, the large gateway just, as I had seen it m my dream with its pillars of old brick.

The two leading sections had already solved the problem of water. Stacks of guns stood at the foot of the walls, in the shadow of which many of my men were already enjoying deeply desired rest.

The tableau thus formed was that of the dream of 1911. Nothing sensational took place in this spot; therefore, this dream consisted of nothing but a startling view into the future, showing me, notably, my future situation as an officer, which it was impossible to suspect in 1911.

This premonitory dream was exceptionally precise. Monsieur Saurel saw, in 1911, an episode of the war of 1914—18, in which he served as an officer. It is a case similar to that related in "L'Inconnu" (555)—the case of Monsieur Regnier who in 1869 saw himself figuring in an episode of the war of 1870. In this case, as in all similar ones, the question arises: If one has seen a year in advance, or seven years in advance, or three years in advance, as in the case of the Abbe Garnier which has just been quoted, a scene which was to take place at the time when it did take place, then the free will of man does not exist and the true doctrine is absolute fatalism. At such a date in 1849 the Italian woman had to be in the house on the road to Rome, with three little children, drinking workmen, a gamboling colt, etc.; at such a date in 1870, Monsieur

Regnier had to be a soldier facing the Prussians and Bavarians and hurl himself, bayonet in hand, upon the aggressors; at such a date in 1918 Monsieur Saurel had to send the soldiers to get water in front of the unknown tower. And the same is true of hundreds of similar cases of prevision. What remains of our free will, of our personal liberty? Is there not here an absolute contradiction? Is it possible to admit at one and the same time the liberty of our actions and the sight of the future?

This question will be fully discussed in the following chapter. Suffice it to say, at present, that it is extremely subtle, but can nevertheless be solved by the reconciliation of two apparently contradictory terms, by imagining that the human will is one of the factors employed in the production of these events; that something will always happen, but that it is not inevitable, for all that; and that one sees simply what will happen, thought transcending, suppressing time, time not existing in itself, and the past and the future being able to exist together in an eternal present.

If one refused to admit this reconciliation one would be obliged to admit that Bismarck was not responsible for having falsified the dispatch from Ems in order to precipitate France into the German abyss opened before her, and that in 1914 William II had no responsibility for the Austrian trickery in the exploitation of the murder of Sarajevo. Otherwise, we should have to admit that there are no bad men, —profligates, knaves, impostors, murderers, —nor any good men either, — humanitarian, devoted, honest, sacrificing themselves to the moral and intellectual welfare of humanity.

We shall speak of this subject in detail in the next chapter, in connection with the communication that was made mc in 1911 by Frederic Passy.

Because of the astonishment that such experiences as these cause us, we seek for all the hypotheses contrary to the admission of the facts. We imagine, for example, in order to explain the sensation of the already seen, that the impression produced on the retina by a country-side or a scene is simultaneously registered in the memory and in the consciousness, and we suppose that by means of even a very slight delay (the fraction of a second) the storing of the image takes place in the memory before the conscious perception is felt. In this case, the sense of memory having been struck a fugitive instant before that of the real

vision, we think that we have already seen the present scene, in some undetermined former time; for even the tenth of a second, as is proved by dreams, can give the impression of a very long time. Another hypothesis assumes that the perception of a scene which one believes one has already seen, can be compared to the optical phenomenon of double refraction, that causes one image reaching two faces of a prism to be refracted on two different planes: there would be one projection on the plane of the past and one on the plane of the present; for an instant our soul would see double.

These explanations are most ingenious; but, on the one hand, they are not proved—not at all—and remain in the realm of pure imagination, which has nothing to do with scientific exactness; and, on the other hand, the facts contradict them, when they have been previously related, as in the case of the square of Saint-Maixent, which was seen several days in advance by a young scholar of Niort who was not familiar with it (see page 228); of the child seized with croup, an event seen the day before ("L'Inconnu," page 550); of the despairing patient of Dr. Liebault (see page 309); of the election of Casimir-Perier (page 270), etc. In these cases the explanation just given lacks common sense. Perhaps it is sometimes applicable, but rarely, if it is true at all.

We must therefore look for something else.[2]

Professor Ribot of the Institute has further treated this subject in his work on "Les Maladies de la Memoire." He writes:

It sometimes happens, in a foreign country, that the sudden turn of a path or of a river brings us face to face with a landscape that seems to us we have seen before. When we are introduced for the first time to a person, we feel that we have already met him. In reading new thoughts in a book we feel that they have already been presented to the mind.

The author thinks that this illusion is explained by the following hypothesis:

[2] A great number of authors have analyzed this subject without approaching the solution, such as Dugas, Lalande, Vignoli, Wigan, Maudsley, Anjel, Binet, Fouille, Pieron, Vaschide, Soury, P. Lapie, but none have divined it with the exception of Bozzano and C. de Visme. See La Revue des studes sychiques for 1901

The impression received evokes from our past similar impressions, vague, confused, barely glimpsed, but they suffice to make us believe that the new state is a repetition. There is at bottom a quickly felt resemblance between two states of consciousness that lead us to identify them. It is an error, but it is only partly an error, because there is indeed in our past something which resembles a first experience.

This explanation is certainly not satisfactory. It does not explain any of the events that I have just described. The author remarks elsewhere, very honestly, that it does not apply to such cases as the following that he gives:

A sick man called Sander, on learning of the death of a person of his acquaintance, was seized with an indefinable terror, because it seemed to him that he had already experienced this impression. "I felt that already, some time before, while I was lying here in this same bed, X—had come and told me, 'Muller died some time ago.' He couldn't die twice!"

Monsieur Ribot must have been very much embarrassed to explain physiologically these curious facts. He has also quoted the following example, which much resembles the former:

Wigan in his book on "La Duahite de l'esprit," which he pretends to explain by the two hemispheres of our brain, reports that while he was present at the funeral services of the Princess Charlotte, in the chapel at Windsor, he had all at once the feeling of having already been a witness of the same spectacle. The illusion was fugitive.

No hypothesis is acceptable. People used to suppose that the illusion of the already seen might be one of the unconscious memories inherited from our ancestors, who might have known what we see at present. This also is inadmissible.

Assuredly, any explanation is almost impossible. Monsieur Ribot qualifies these coincidences as the actions of “false memory.” But that is not an explanation. He mentions, further on, the following incident, taken from a work by Dr. Arnold Pick, which is no less inexplicable:

An educated man, who was very intelligent about his illness and who has given a written description of it, was attacked, toward the age of thirty-two, by a peculiar mental state. If he was present at a fair, if he was visiting some spot, if he met some one, this happening with all its circumstances seemed so familiar to him that he felt sure he had already gone through the same experiences, had been surrounded by precisely the same persons, or the same objects, with the same sky and the same weather, etc. If he undertook some new work it seemed to him that he had already performed it and under the same conditions. This feeling sometimes occurred the same day, or at the end of a few minutes or hours, sometimes the following day only, but with perfect clearness.[3]

That is evidently a pathological case.

“In these phenomena of false memory,” writes Monsieur Ribot, “there is an anomaly of the mental mechanism which escapes us.” But this designation “false memory” explains nothing to us. The learned physiologist, nevertheless, tries to understand, and he has good reason to try. “We can admit,” says he, “that the mechanism for the localization as to the past works backward,” and he proposes the explanation which follows:

The image thus formed is very intense, of a hallucinatory nature; it imposes itself as a reality because nothing rectifies this illusion. As a result, the real impression is thrown into the background, with the indistinct character of memories; it is localized in the past, wrongly if

[3] Apropos of memory, Monsieur Ribot cites assuredly one of the most curious examples that has been observed: an imbecile recalled the day of each burial made in the parish for thirty-five years. He could repeat with unvarying exactness the name and age of the deceased, as well as those who had worn mourning. Outside of this mortuary register he did not have an idea; he could not answer the simplest question and was not even capable of remembering it

we consider things objectively, rightly if we consider things subjectively. This hallucinatory state, in fact, while very vivid, does not efface the real impression, but as it springs from it, as it has been produced by it too late, it must appear like a second experience. It takes the place of the real impression, it seems the most recent, and such it is, in fact. To us, who judge it from without and in accordance with what has come to pass externally, it is false that the impression was received twice; to the sick man, who judges according to the ideas of his consciousness, it is true that the impression was received twice, and within these limits his statement is incontestable.

We will confess that these “explanations” of the learned professor explain nothing at all. There is here a series of psychic phenomena that are very different from one another, and to which the same theory could not apply.

To Monsieur Ribot the memory is in its essence a biological fact, and by accident a psychological fact. As the number of brain cells is somewhere between six hundred millions and twelve hundred millions, and that of the brain nerves has been reckoned at four or five thousand millions, the brain can be considered as a laboratory full of movement, where a thousand labors go on at the same time: the memory-impressions are surely numerous enough. But certain impressions are, as we have just seen, psychic rather than physical. If it is only by accident that memory appertains to the psychic world, this accident is perhaps the one thing essential to the discovery of the invisible world, just as the apparent disorders, the disturbances in the universal gravitation, are the most fertile source of discovery in astronomy. We have had proof of this in the discovery of the planet Neptune, through the perturbations of uranus, in that of the companion of Sirius, etc. No, the already seen is not a physiological fact of the brain; it is a metaphysical phenomenon, the realization of what has been already seen.

Let us now enter fully into the problem of the knowledge of the future.

CHAPTER 9. KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE

Will sits by the side of destiny as the directing power.

Golden Verses of Pythagoras.

WHAT we have been considering relative to the already seen is the natural introduction to that which follows. We shall now study observations verifying the premonitory visions that establish the knowledge of the future.

I have published under this title, in "La Revue,"[1] of March 1 and of April 1, 1912, the principal documents proving that, under certain conditions, the future has been seen and known in advance. Many writers have taken up this subject since the publication of these documents— and have reproduced them without always taking the trouble to mention my work; but that is an insignificant detail. What particularly interests us here is to know that the future has been known, described, announced, often with detailed precision, and that, therefore, there is in the human being a psychic principle endowed with faculties independent of the properties of matter, a soul as distinguished from the body.

I shall first point out the case of premonition by dream that I published in 1911, in the "Annales des Sciences psychiques," then in "La Revue," of which I have just spoken. Here is the curious account:

Monsieur Frederic Passy, the venerable member of the Institute whose long career has been so honorably consecrated to the cause of pacifism as opposed to the imbecility of human war,[2] came to see me one fine day in the month of January, 1911, having valiantly climbed my five flights despite his eighty-nine years. It was one of his last visits and the incident described surely merited its selection by him.

[1] Formerly the Revue des revues, now the Revue mondiale
[2] As for me, I have considered myself to the same protests since my first work (1862), when I was twenty years old. Quite uselessly, also, so universal is human stupidity

“I did not find it in your ‘L’Inconnu,’” he said, “and I feel sure it will interest you, as it comes from a scrupulous writer, a man of incontestable integrity, the Quaker Etienne de Grellet. I am giving you his account, as I have copied it down, of his trip into Russia. During his stay at St. Petersburg the Countess Toutschkoff told what follows to the Quaker traveler:

“About three months before the entry of the French into Russia the general her husband was with her on their estate in Toula. She dreamed that while she was in a hotel in an unknown city, her father entered, holding her only son by the hand, and said to her these exact words:

“‘Your happiness is ended, your husband has fallen. He fell at E’orodino.’

“She awoke in great distress, but seeing her husband near her she realized that it was a dream and succeeded in falling asleep again.

“The dream occurred again and was followed by so much melancholy that it was long before she recovered.

“The dream occurred a third time. At this she experienced such anguish that she awoke her husband and asked him, ‘Where is Borodino?’

“He did not know. In the morning they both began to search, with their father, on the map of the country, but failed to find it. At that time it was a very obscure spot, but it became famous through the bloody battle which was fought near it. Nevertheless, the impression which the countess had received was profound and her anxiety ‘was great. Then the theater of the war moved away; but soon it approached again.

“Before the French armies reached Moscow, General Toutschkoff was put at the head of the reserve army. One morning the father of the countess, holding her young son by the hand, entered the room in the hotel where she was living. He was sad, as she had seen him in her dream, and he said to her:

“‘He has fallen, he has fallen at Borodino.’

"She saw herself in the same room, surrounded by the same objects with which she had been surrounded in her dream.

"Her husband had, indeed, been one of the numerous victims of the bloody battle waged upon the banks of the river Borodino, which gave its name to a little village."

(An exact copy) Frederic Passy.

This premonitory dream, so tragically precise, is assuredly most characteristic.

Can it be supposed that it had been formulated afterward in the mind of the narrator? No, as its realization had aroused in him an unforgettable emotion, and three months before its realization they had searched for this place on the map of Russia.

It presents all the qualities of authenticity. But then, as I have remarked, if the death of the general at Borodino was seen several months in advance, were this death and this battle therefore inevitable? And in such case what becomes of free will? Napoleon, then, was forced to make the fatal Russian campaign and was not responsible? Are human liberty and responsibility only an illusion?

We shall later analyze these undoubtedly confusing consequences. What shall we think? Fatalism seems in discord with all human progress. But it is a mistake to suppose that fatality and determinism are identical.

In regard to this a young girl of Naples, Mademoiselle Vera Kunzler, sent me in the month of April, 1917, a letter full of distress because of some sentences of mine which she had read concerning the incontestable cases of the sight of the future, begging me to explain how it was possible to reconcile these carefully observed facts, which I vouched for, with free will, our sense of liberty, and our responsibility. She was all the more insistent because she was still under the shock of a profound emotion, caused by a tragic prediction which had recently been realized in her own family.

I replied to her that fatalism and determinism are two doctrines absolutely different from each other, and that it was necessary not to

confuse them, as is generally done. In the first, man is a passive being who awaits events that are inevitable. In the second, on the contrary, man is active and forms a contributing cause. One does not see what must happen but what will happen. Something will always happen. It is this something which we see, without its being inevitable, for all that. The distinction, it is true, is extremely subtle, but it seemed to me that her young soul of seventeen years, pure and free of all preconceived ideas, and of a sensitiveness which in her correspondence struck me as particularly delicate, would perceive this distinction, if she gave it the necessary attention. I begged her at the same time to let me know of the prophecy which had been realized and which had so profoundly troubled her.

Here is her letter, which I reproduce textually:

Dear Great Master:

How happy I was to receive your kind letter! It was doubly welcome, first because it came from you, and after that because it brought me a little light on the ideas that are whirling in my brain. I have spent a good deal of thought on your letter, and I have well understood what you had the goodness to explain to me: what will happen may be seen, but is not inevitable. It has brought me infinite relief, for I felt myself going mad over the thought that we are no longer masters of anything at all, not even of our own minds.

You would like to know, dear Master, what the event is which led me to believe in predestination. I will tell you of it as best I can.

It was in the spring of 1910, seven years ago. At the time we were very intimate with a German lady, named Helene Schmidt. She was a medium of extraordinary power, and as Mama was very much interested in spiritualistic séances, she asked her one day to hold one of these séances.

I was not present, for at the time I was a little girl, about twelve years old, and I was at school, but Mama and our old servant have often described the incident to me.

Helene Schmidt had only to place her hands upon the table for it to begin at once to rock violently. You know, Master, the manner of communicating with spirits, if there are spirits. When the table, a large and heavy dining table, which it would have been impossible to lift by muscular force alone, began to rap regular blows, indicating that a spirit was present, Mama asked its name; it named itself by the alphabet, saying it was called Anton. The medium was absolutely unacquainted with this name and she had no knowledge either, who was in question when it was mentioned. Anton, I will add, was Anton Fiedler, an Austrian, the first husband of one of my aunts, a sister of Mama's, who had married as a second husband Adolphe Riesbeck. Helene Schmidt was even ignorant of the existence of all these people. As this Anton Fiedler had been my aunt's nearest relative, Mama thought of asking something about her future. To the first question, "Will Riesbeck always keep his fortune?" the spirit answered brusquely, "No."

"In how many years will he lose it?"

The table struck two blows — "Two years."

Mama then asked, "Will he live long after having lost his fortune?" and the reply was clear and precise, "Five years." Then Mama wished to know how he would die, but the spirit answered only that my uncle would die suddenly. To the questions as to whether he would die of sickness, accident, suicide, shipwreck, or as the victim of a crime it answered, "No." It was impossible to know how he would die: at that time no one thought of war, otherwise a question concerning it would also have been asked. All that we were able to obtain from Anton Fiedler was the reply to this inquiry: "How old will Riesbeck's son be when he dies ?" And the table answered very distinctly: "Seventeen years." Then everything ceased.

Dear Master, I do not permit myself to comment; I tell you simply what happened. Mama did not at once tell this to my aunt; for fear that she would repeat it to her husband. For that matter, she did not believe in such things. Unfortunately, every thing that had been foretold happened with the most frightful precision: In the spring of 1912—that is to say exactly two years after the prophecy—my uncle Riesbeck lost his fortune on the stock exchange in a daring speculation. Some time

after, Mama told my aunt, who was and still is at Geneva, of the prophecy which had been made to her and told her the second part of it.

My aunt replied, as any one else would have replied in her place, — that it was all nonsense and that we must not have faith in it.

Nevertheless, the second part of the prophecy has also been realized. Mama and I often spoke of this séance and I said to her: "If the spirit spoke the truth, my uncle ought to die at the beginning of the year 1917."

Well, Master, Adolphe Riesbeck died at the front on February 12, 1917, — a sudden death, a bullet in the head, — when my cousin Mario was nearly eighteen. And this death of which the spirit could not tell us precisely, which was not sickness, nor accident, nor crime, nor any of the known deaths, this death was death in battle, of which no one was thinking then.

I am sending you in this, dear Master, a portion of a letter that my poor aunt sent us at the time of her husband's death. It is written hi German, but I believe you know that language, and I shall ask Mama to add her signature to my letter.

I hope this strange prophecy brings a modest contribution to your researches. I promise myself the greatest pleasure in reading the book that you have said you would publish after the war on the "Prevision of the Future."

I am happy, dear Master, to know that everything is not inevitable, for the thought which tormented me was this: The death of my dear uncle was predestined, when the bullet which was to kill him was not even cast.

Pardon me for trespassing on your precious time, and it is the thought of this that often restrains me from writing to you as I should love to do. But on my part I have been very happy to answer your request. All that I write you is absolutely true.

I salute you, Master, respectfully and caramente, an Italian word which you will surely understand.

Your goddaughter of the Astronomical Society of France,

Vera Kunzler.

I certify that my daughter's account is exact in all its details.

E. Kunzler.

It would be superfluous, for my readers, to add any comment to this account, the complete sincerity of which cannot be doubted. The feelings of profound anguish and infinite curiosity expressed in the first letter that the narrator sent me had already convinced me of it. We have here a typical example of the prevision of the future.

As for its apparently paradoxical agreement with determinism, we are going to speak of that.

Such facts can no longer be denied. All negation would be a flagrant proof of ignorance — or of another state of mind even less excusable.

In this connection, the premonition of General Toutschkoff and my commentary having been published by "La Revue" of March and April, 1912, Frederic Passy sent me the following letter:

Neuilly: April 27, 1912.

My Dear Flammarion:

I am among those who hesitate to believe in the possibility of the premonitions of which you speak in your articles; because I see in them a negation of that liberty which no longer exists if events are absolutely determined in advance. For all that, I myself furnished you with one of the incidents that you have cited.

I must tell you that you will find another in the book of Monsieur G. Lenotre, "The Marquis de la Rouerie and the Breton Conspiracy of 1790—1793."

Madame de Saint-Aulaire - the daughter of Monsieur de Noyau, one of the conspirators - announced one morning to her father, who did not in

the least believe it, that he would be arrested and taken before the revolutionary tribunal in Paris, but that she would succeed in saving his life. The incident is vouched for not only by her—who died long afterward—but by her son, at the time about fifteen years of age, who was to be an important personage under the Restoration and under Louis Philippe as a member of the French Academy.

You will judge for yourself what we ought to think of this event.

Frederic Passy.

This premonition was precisely realized.[3]

The question of human liberty deserves to be analyzed.

We still read with real esthetic pleasure the works of our eminent geometrician Laplace, one of the greatest and most penetrating of the minds which are the pride of France, and at the same time one of our purest writers. This is what he wrote, concerning free will, in his "Essai philosophique sur les probabilites" (It is the second edition, of 1814, which I have before me):

All events, even those that, through their insignificance, seem to have no part in the great laws of nature, are as necessary a consequence of them as the movement of the sun. In the ignorance of the bonds that unite them to the entire system of the universe, they have been supposed to depend upon final causes or upon chance, according to whether they occurred or succeeded one another with regularity or without apparent order, but these imaginary causes have been successively withdrawn, with the limits of our knowledge, and have disappeared entirely before the healthy philosophy which sees in them only the expression of the ignorance of which we are the veritable causes.

The actual events have, with what preceded them, a relation that is founded upon the self-evident principle that a thing cannot begin to be

[3] I know of another case similar to it, reported by Lombard de Langres

without a cause that has produced it. This axiom, known as the principle of sufficient reason, extends even to the slightest events. The freest possible will cannot, without a determining motive, give them birth for if, when all the circumstances of the two positions were exactly the same, it acted in one and refrained from acting in the other, its choice would, in fact, be without cause: it would then be, said Leibnitz, the blind chance of the Epicureans. The contrary opinion is an illusion of the mind, which, losing sight of the fugitive reasons for the choice of the will among indifferent things, persuades itself that it has determined itself and without any reasons.

We ought, therefore, to see the present state of the universe as the result of its former state and as the cause of that which will follow. An intelligence which, at a given instant, could understand all the forces with which nature is animated, and the respective situations of the beings which compose it, if it was vast enough to submit these data to analysis, and could include in the same formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the least atom—to such an intelligence nothing would be uncertain, and the future as well as the past would lie open before it. In the perfection which it has been able to bring to astronomy, the human mind offers a feeble outline of this intelligence.[4]

We shall discuss this reasoning in a moment.

We are accustomed to attribute the paternity of this to Laplace. But all thinkers had uttered it before him, and nothing is more natural: it almost dates from La Palice. The first edition of this hook on probabilities, consists of a Course given by Laplace in 1795 at the Normal School founded by the Convention.

But in 1787 Immanuel Kant had written in his “Critique of Pure Reason”:

[4] Laplace, Essai philosophique sur les probabilities (Paris, 1814), p. 2.

From the point of view of time and its regular order, if we could penetrate into the soul of a man so that it will reveal itself by acts internal as well as external, if we could understand all its motives, even the slightest, and at the same time all the external influences, we could calculate the future conduct of this man with all the certainty of an eclipse of the sun or of the moon.[5]

Kant is not the inventor of this argument, either. We find it among the most ancient authors, as far back as the Romans, as far back as Cicero, for example. In his treatise on "Divination,"[6] he has his brother, Quintus, explain the connection between the sight of the future and fatality, he says:

In order to account for divination, it is necessary to go back to the Divinity, to destiny, to nature. Reason obliges us to confess that everything is governed by destiny. I call destiny that which the Greeks named ei^ap^vn-' that is to say, an order, a series of causes joined together and producing results. There is that perpetual truth the source of which is in eternity itself. According to this there is nothing in the future for which nature does not already contain sufficient causes. Thus destiny would be the eternal cause of all things, the cause that construes past, present, and future events. It is thus by means of observation that we can learn what are usually the consequences of each cause. Without it is this chain of causes and effects that explains inspirations and dreams.

Let us add that since everything is ruled by destiny, if a mortal could exist capable of conceiving the connection between all causes he would never be mistaken. In fact, he who knew all the causes of events could not fail to understand all the future.

This mode of reasoning is impeccable in itself and, I repeat, what Monsieur de La Palice says approaches the truth. That there are no

[5] French edition, p. 289. Foissac, La Chance et la Destinee, p. 212
[6] De Divinatione, lib. I, cap. 55

effects without a cause, is evident. But the conclusion of fatality, or of absolute determinism, is not backed by the same evidence as this reasoning of simple good sense.

Despite my profound admiration for Laplace, on whose works I was brought up, I confess that I cannot share his absolute negation of free will. My readers already know what I have written concerning this thorny point, in my Memoirs.

“The freest will in the world cannot act without a determining motive.” Doubtless. But among the causes concerned in the choice, our own personality exists, and that is not a negligible cause.

This personality acts, one would say, according to its predominant motive, and, is itself, due to former causes, — that is incontestable. Nevertheless it exists, along with our character, and what is here perhaps even more important, even irrefutable, is that we feel very strongly, that we examine, weigh, consider within ourselves, when the matter is worth the trouble, and that we decide with a full sense of our responsibility.

There are times, I admit, when the scales are just in balance, and the smallest added weight may tip them; but this little weight may be our own fancy, our whim, our will, even our own pleasure in frustrating a foreseen result, — in a word, to the extent of the exercise of our liberty. No one has the authority to declare that all this is “an illusion” of our mind, or to state this hypothesis as a demonstrated truth. The principle of the “sufficient reason” is within ourselves, when we discuss it before the tribunal of our conscience.

That we decide in accordance with the predominant motive does not prove that we do not act according to our character. Our own will is associated with this character, without being the slave of it. In his treatise on “The Heavens” Aristotle wrote (Book II, chapter 13): “It is like the case of a man who, being both very hungry and very thirsty, finds himself at an equal distance from food and drink; necessarily he would remain motionless.” Dante said the same thing in the Fourth Book of the “Paradiso”: “Intra duo cibi, distanti e moventi. D’un modoprima si morris di fame, — che liber uomo t’un recasse a denti. ” Buridan has the credit of having expressed this reasoning, putting a donkey in place of the man.

There is no doubt in any one's mind that neither the donkey nor the man would die of hunger. There is nothing of the mechanical in nature.

Is there absolute incompatibility between prevision and free will? That is what is generally stated, and by ancient writers as well as by moderns.

The author of the "L'Histoire de la Divination dans 1'antiquite," Monsieur Bouche-Leclereq of the Institute, writes that an uncertain future, depending upon free will, does not agree with the idea of the fixed laws inspired by the sight of the universal order, and that the popular instinct, anticipating the philosophical theories, has been insuperable in its inclination to consider the future as unavoidable (Volume I, page 15); that the future cannot be foreseen just because it is inevitable" (ibid.); that there is an unending conflict between prevision and liberty and that the one sets aside the other" (ibid., page 16). Sextus Empiricus has shown that since future events must occur either necessarily or by chance or be produced by free agents, divination is useless in the first ease and impossible in the second case (ibid., page 79).

In his "Essay on Free Will" Schopenhauer writes: "If we do not admit the rigorous necessity of all that happens by virtue of a causality which compels all events without exception, any prevision is impossible and inconceivable" (page 124).

Evidently there is general belief in an incompatibility, an undetermined contradiction between free will and prescience, because we confound "Divine Prescience" with necessity. That is an error.

In the conversations of Goethe with Eckermann, we may read, under the date of October 13, 1825:

What do we know, and with all our intelligence where do we stand today?

Man is not born to solve the problem of the world, but to seek to understand the extent of the problem and to keep, thereafter, well within limits of that which he is able to conceive.

His faculties are not capable of measuring the universe, and to wish to approach the totality of things with the intelligence, when it has so restricted a point of view, is labor lost. The intelligence of man and the intelligence of the Divinity are two very different things.

As soon as we grant liberty to man, that is the end of the omniscience of God; and if, on the other hand, God knows what I shall do, I am not free to do anything but what he knows. I cite this dilemma only as an example of the little we know, and to show that it is not good to touch upon divine secrets.

Also, among the highest truths we ought to express only those that serve the good of the world. The others we ought to keep to ourselves, but like the gentle rays of a hidden sun they may spread and they will spread their light on what we do.

Goethe did not dare go further. Why? Let us find out. Events and happenings generally influence us more than we believe. Let each one analyze attentively the acts of his life and he will readily recognize this. Our free will finds play only in a very restricted compass of activity. “Man proposes and God disposes,” goes an old saying. This is not entirely exact. God, or Destiny — Fatum, as the Latins called it—leaves us a little liberty.

The proverb that is the opposite of the preceding one— each proverb has its opposite—puts it this way:

“Heaven helps those who help themselves.”

Yes, man proposes and events dispose: but at the same time we are the builders of our own destiny.

In short, truth does not exist in the metaphysics of the philosophers who expatiate upon the fatality of destiny, but in the common and practical good sense that is summed up in the universal adage of six words that I have just quoted.

My explanation is essentially careful to remain in the exclusive domain of the positive facts of observation, without having recourse to any hypothesis. When we are told that our feeling of free will is an illusion,

that is an hypothesis. I am sitting down at my desk, and I ask myself what I shall do; I ponder. I reason, I decide on this or that. I am assured that I am the dupe of circumstances external to my will. I maintain, on the contrary, that if I had no reason, I should let events occur as they might, and that liberty consists precisely in the choice of what seems preferable to me. It is not absolute, no matter how much we might wish it to be, it is relative; we are constantly upset in our plans; there are even some days when nothing goes right. It is very imperfect, but it is our incontestable sensation, and we have not the right to suppress it in order to substitute a hypothesis for it. It is as evident as the day. It is an appearance, they may say. Yes, an appearance like the sun, like a landscape, like a tree, like an armchair, like a house, — things which we know through the impressions they make upon us, — but this appearance is confounded with the reality.

There is in it a fact of daily observation, constant, legitimate, irrefutable.

Oh! assuredly, we are often very passive and form no radical determination. And the objection is offered that when we debate within ourselves and make up our minds after ripe reflection, it is always in accordance with a predominating motive, so that our pretended liberty is like a pair of scales, one pan of which will sink according to the weight placed in it. Beyond a doubt, we ourselves make up our minds, when we reason coldly weighing the pros and cons, to that which seems preferable to us. But it is precisely in that that our reason acts, and no sophistry can suppress this conviction in us. We even feel that in the opposite case we should be unreasonable; and when, at times, we are led to act against our judgment, we feel we have been, in some respects, forced to it.

As for free will, is not the following declaration, which Juvenal put in the mouth of an imperious woman, the best argument?

Sic volo; sic jubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas. “I wish it, I order it; my will is my only reason.”

“Because such is our pleasure,” said Louis XIV, with a pride that was to destroy royalty.

Without doubt, is the reply, we are endowed with a certain liberty of action; we can choose, we can determine according to the preponderant motive; but to seek for absolute free will! Is not each one of us led

according to his temperament, his ideas, his preferences, and also according to circumstances and the chain of events! How can we free ourselves from the chain! We begin works, big or little, without knowing whither they will lead us. Let each one examine his own life and see clearly how feeble is his personal liberty. We are carried along in the whirlwind. Man proposes and destiny disposes. This destiny is the universal spirit of which we form but a minute portion. But we, also, are spirits.

Absolute free will? No, relative free will.

Undoubtedly, our liberty is much more restricted than it appears to superficial minds. The cosmic progress of the universe leads us on. We live under the influence of astronomical conditions, of meteorological conditions, of heat, of cold, of climate, of electricity, of light, of our surroundings, of our heredity, of our education, of our temperament, of our health, of our strength of will, etc. Our liberty is comparable to that of a passenger on a ship that bears him from Europe to America. His voyage is traced in advance. His liberty stops short at the ship's railing. He can walk upon his floating edifice, talk, read, smoke, sleep, play cards, etc.; but he cannot leave his moving home. The sketch of our existence is traced in advance, like the movements of the portions of a machine, and we have a role to fill, with a certain amount of personal action. This conditional liberty is certainly very limited, but it exists all the same. You are, let us suppose, at a friend's table. You are offered certain dishes, you can choose between white and. red wine, between Burgundy and Bordeaux, beer and pure water, and you know perfectly that you are free to choose, with due regard for your stomach, and by making use of your reason.

If we observe with care, at any moment, our least acts, we shall see clearly that our liberty is extremely limited, that what we decide to do in the morning, when we awaken, may be disturbed for a thousand causes, but that nevertheless our principal intention will be more or less realized, and that our choice will be felt.

It is the same with great things as with little; our most important acts are determined both by circumstances and our will.

We can admit the premonitory sight of the future without compromising, for all that, the principle of free will and of human responsibility. The present never stops: it is constantly continued by the future. Something will always happen; it is not inevitable for all that, if it is granted that the human will forms a part of the chain of events, and that this will enjoys a relative liberty; what it decides becomes real, but it might not have decided; the future is the succession of the past, and seeing it does not differ essentially from seeing the past. This fact does not at all prevent us from admitting that the human will is one of the causes of action in events. Something else might have happened than what did happen, and it is this other thing that would be seen in premonitions.

What happens is the result of the chain of causes, whether it is a revengeful force which orders its adversaries to be shot or guillotined, as Paris saw it in 1793 and 1871 (and as it has been seen almost everywhere on our lovely planet), or whether it is a philanthropic force which interposes in the midst of a revolution to stop its excesses or to direct its progress. What happens does not prevent the existence of good and evil, of the tyrant and the victim, the just and the unjust, the brutal and the thoughtful, the intelligent and the idiotic, the bloodthirsty and the pacifistic, the exploiters and the exploited, the robber and the robbed.

To see, by any process whatever, what will happen through the succession of effects and causes, can be reconciled with the existence of all the effective causes, including liberty.

The future is no more a mystery than the past. If I calculate today that the movements of the moon about the earth and the movement of the earth about the sun will lead our globe and its satellite in a direct line (sun—moon—earth) with France, upon the passing of the shadow of the moon, on August 11, 1999, at half-past ten in the morning, and that a total eclipse of the sun will be observed, to the north of Paris during two minutes, there is no more mystery in this prediction than in the retrospective reckoning of the eclipse of the sun which took place over Peripagnan, on July 8, 1842. At the moment of the eclipse of 1842, which was made famous by the observations of Arago in his native town, I was four months and eleven days old; at the moment of that of August 11, 1999, I shall have been dead a long time: but that has no importance

whatever: what is today the future for me, for you, for those now living, will be the present of others and will then become the past.

One may object that the comparison of astronomical events with human happenings is not complete, as it is granted that there is no liberty in the movements of the stars and that with them fatalism is absolute. But we can answer that if free will is included in the number of active causes, its effects will be felt nonetheless.

There is no doubt that everything which happens is the necessary result of active causes, including the most abject crimes, including the burning of Rome, including the martyrdom of the Christians by Nero, including the violation of Belgium by the Germans, the assassinations of its citizens, the burning of Louvain, the bombardment of the cathedral of Rheims, the infamous massacres of the Last German war. But each actor forms part of the active cause and is partly responsible. The events are a mechanical series, which includes the sentence of Jeanne d 'Arc to the flames by Bishop Cauchon, on the accusation of witchcraft, and her later canonization by other bishops; which includes the chemist Lavoisier, the astronomer Bailly, the poet Andre Chenier, the philosopher Condoreet, victims of the blind and ferocious revolutionists. All these things are brought about by determining causes, but they are not inevitable, and the course of events might have been different. To conclude, from this, that responsibilities do not exist means chaos. The Emperor of Germany who, in unchaining the war of 1914, caused the death of twelve million human beings, is not to be compared to Saint Vincent de Paul; neither the one nor the other is an automaton, a slave of fatalism.[7]

To suppress liberty would be to suppress all responsibility, all moral valuation, to equalize the good and the wicked, to which our inner certainty is opposed. In this case we should have to give up our clearest and most evident ideas.

[7] There are wicked people who know quite well they are doing evil and do it on purpose. I have had the proof of it more than once, although the whole of my life has been consecrated to the good of humanity. I have never forgotten that at the workmen of Paris, at the Ecole Turgot (1865-1870), a course free of them as for me, I had, although I was in want of sesterces, cherished ambition of buying a pretty little statuette of the Venus de Medici, which I had noticed in a shop of plaster casts. She had cost me fifteen francs. I was carrying her away, over my heart, in happy satisfaction, when a gamin flung himself upon my neck from behind and uttered cries of joy at seeing my pretty little statuette broken into fragments on the sidewalk. Yet it was to teach these humble brothers that I was giving my course.

Every one has before him his own unknown fate; but events will come to pass, despite the more or less developed free will of each person, and even because of this free will. In human life all men act in various ways, and the consequences result from all this.

There are fools and wise men (perhaps more fools than wise men) that are certainly not dominated by reason, and those especially in the administration of countries.

Even while each of us has before him his unknown fate, we each create this fate: we act according to our faculties, our possibilities, our heredity, our education, our judgment, our hearts, and knowing quite well that we enjoy relative liberty and can make decisions. We are the artisans of our destiny.

Whatever we may do, the hour of our death is already determined. Why? Because events will succeed one another, including our caprices, our weaknesses, our imprudences, our mistakes, including all that will come to pass about us. We act, naturally, according to our possibilities and our mentalities. An honest man will not be made to lie; a generous man will not become avaricious. The action of each one, limited by his faculties, exists none the less, and there are cases when weeks, when months of reflection are necessary for us to make our decisions. Nevertheless, our acts are linked together, and seeing them in advance does not alter the chain.

It seems to me that Bozzano, the laborious analyst of psychic phenomena, has rationally defined this apparent antimony in writing: “Ni libre arbitre ni determinisme absolus during the incarnate existence of the spirit, but conditional liberty.”

You might still, perhaps, object that if what happens must necessarily happen, it is superfluous to torment ourselves in order to succeed in anything whatever, to try to carry off the victory in a competition, to go after the doctor for a sick person, to struggle against an adversary, etc. This objection proves precisely our action in the order of things. However much of a fatalist you may believe yourself, you run as quickly as possible after the doctor, you serve the country against the invader, you call the fire department to put out a fire, you put out a fire which has started from a spark falling on your papers in your workroom, etc. You

have reason and you make use of it. This does not at all prove that you lack it and that you are an automaton.

Does not the best proof that we have of our liberty, of our powers of free choice, of conscious decision reside in the intimate, absolute feeling we have of it, against which no sophism can prevail? You know that you can make any gesture you please. It is no use to tell you that the fancy to lift your finger is preceded by a series of antecedent ideas; this fancy is itself real and comes from nothing but our mind endowed with mental liberty.

The future is determined by circumstances, including human liberty, including even the rancor of the unjustly beaten animal, and a thousand special instances of which we scarcely think.

The human personality is a party to active motives in the march of human events.

There is the Solution of the problem stated by Cicero, Saint Augustine, Laplace and their followers.

An extremely subtle distinction must be made here in order not to confound the inevitable chain of human events with fatalism. What happens is not inevitable, although it is the necessary result of its causes. A man receives a blow in the back from the fist of a hurried passer-by in the midst of a crowd: he might not have received it, for, on one hand, he might not have gone out of his house on that day or he might not have taken that direction, and the man who assaulted him might not have been there himself. Things would have happened differently, that is all, and the event would have been something else. Nevertheless, a premonitory vision might have been seen of what would happen, without this vision s proving, for all that, the absence of free will in the two actors. We cooperate in the march of events. It is not modest to speak of ourselves, but it is just there that we are the best judges; and I shall permit myself to use an example that I know about exactly. For many years I have struggled to spread the knowledge of astronomy in the world, and I have in a measure succeeded. Illustrious friends of science and progress have given me the most precious assistance in the foundation and gradual organization of the Astronomical Society of France. No one could efface from my mind the different struggles that I have undergone or make me admit that that was not a personal work of

my own: I know something about it, and all organizers are in my position. Will is not a vain word. Each one can make the same reflections over what concerns him. We act and the future is made of our consecutive actions. That is not fatalism. It is even the opposite. Fatalism is the doctrine of the drowsy; fatalists await events, which they suppose must come to pass nevertheless and in spite of everything. The contrary is the case, we work and we cooperate in the march of events. Far from being passive, we are active, we ourselves construct the edifice of the future. Determinism ought not to be confounded with fatalism. The latter represents inertia, the former represents action.[8]

Fatalism is Oriental, Turkish; determinism is European. There is an abyss between the two civilizations.

To see the future is simply to see what is going to happen. It is not to foresee, it is to see. In astronomy we calculate the orbit of a comet, for example, the normal theoretic orbit, the curve — eliptic, parabolic, or hyperbolic — in space. But it is possible for the comet to pass in the neighborhood of a large planet, the attraction of which will influence it. This disturbance will modify its course, and our sight of the comet, concerning its position, will not be exact and precise unless we allow for this disturbing influence.

All influences have their effect upon events. That of man is not more negligible than the planetary disturbances, although it enjoys a certain independence.

Therefore it is not impossible to reconcile our feeling of liberty with a premonitory knowledge of human events.

Suppose an observer is placed near the top of a mountain at the foot of which there stretches away a vast plain. He sees a man following a path that leads to a village, and he divines that this traveler is going to the

[8] We see that the greater number of contemporary writers imagine that the discussion of determinism is a philosophical theory of modern invention. That is not all true. Let us open Volume I of the Palingenesie philosophique of Charles Bonnet (Geneva, 1770), at the age of 33; there we read: “I have never said, because I have never thought, that motives determine the action of the soul, as a body determines the movements of another body. The body does not possess action of itself: the soul contains within itself a principle of activity, which it only holds from Him who made it. To speak exactly, motives do not determine it, but it determines itself in view of the motives, and this metaphysical distinction is important.”

village for some business or other. In what way would the fact of seeing his action contradict the liberty of the individual?

The free will of the actor is not in contradiction with the sight of the observer. The anticipated sight of an event does not influence this event. From the mountain on which we suppose ourselves, we see, for example, two trains rush quickly into each other, through an error in switching. A disaster is imminent. Our sight, our prevision goes for nothing; the fact of seeing it is entirely foreign to the fact of the event.

To see events unroll in the future as we see those that have unrolled in the past, does not prevent the determining causes, including the human will, from having their effect.

Has it never happened that while reading a novel you have divined exactly the rest of the story? And does not the greatest skill of a writer consist in giving such an appearance of truth to his imaginary personages and to interest the reader so keenly in them, that he is impatient to know the rest? For example, the prince of storytellers, Alexandre Dumas, gave us “Joseph Balsamo” after “The Queen’s Necklace.” While reading the list of the innumerable works of this author, you may have remarked the title of “The Countess of Charny.” Well, without having read this last romance, without knowing who this countess may be, has it not happened that, while you were reading the twelfth chapter of “The Queen’s Necklace” and the description of the beautiful qualities of Monsieur de Charny, given by Marie Antoinette to Andree de Taverney, who is very pale and deeply moved, — has it not happened that you have divined, in a sudden flash, that Mademoiselle de Taverney, who was in love, would become the Countess of Charny? Have you not divined the future?

Certain persons who disagree might invite me to notice that the characters of Alexandre Dumas are puppets whom he moves at his will, and that my comparison is valueless because it could be used to prove just the contrary of my thesis, and lead us to conclude that, far from being free individuals, men and women are only puppets in the hand of the author whom we name God, Destiny, or Chance.

This objection would not be well founded. In arranging his romances after his own fashion, Alexandre Dumas evidently did what he wished,

what pleased him, what he preferred, what seemed to him most interesting to his readers, and his imagination played the most important role. His personages, imaginary or real, — Andree de Taverney, the Countess of Charny, the bailiff of Suffren and his nephew Charny, Marie Antoinette, the Cardinal de Rohan—appear upon the scene following the caprices of his prodigious talent as a storyteller. I knew Alexandre Dumas, with his large face and his scrubby, shaggy wig, and I can see him burst into peals of laughter, his own hearty laughter, at some psychologist of the Ecole come to oppose grave determinism to his amusing fantasies, and to tell him that lie had been fatally forced to write what he had imagined.

From this assemblage of considerations we can, it seems to me, draw an indisputable conclusion. The cases of spontaneous vision of future events are so numerous and so adequate that the hypothesis of casual coincidence is a hypothesis devoid of value and must be absolutely rejected. Those who have sufficiently studied the question have no doubt at all of this subliminal view. There is no actual scientific explanation of it, but it does not abolish liberty.

Despite appearances, and no matter what may be thought of it by philosophers who have not made sufficiently thorough study of this special question, the sight of the future is not at all in contradiction with the utmost extent of human liberty and free will. We see what is going to happen, we abolish time, which, for that matter, does not exist in itself, as it is a transitory product of the movements of our planet. It is thus, simply, an idea which is abolished. We see what is going to happen as we can see what has happened. If will, caprice, circumstances had brought something else, it would have been this other thing which was seen. Knowledge of the future no more compromises liberty than does the knowledge of the past.

In absolute space, time does not exist. If the earth revolved twice as fast the days would be half as long. These measurements are relative, not fundamental.[9] Let us not confound the succession of events, that which

[9] We are familiar with a great number of observations concerning the relativity of our impressions of time, which has nothing absolute about it. Here is one among a thousand. My regretted friend, Alphonse Bue, has often related to me, and always in the same words, the following observation on the relativity of our impressions of time: He was on horseback, in Algeria, and following the edge of a very steep ravine. For some reason, which he was not given the time to find out, his horse made a misstep

to our human impressions constitutes “time,” with the absolute. Astronomy has already invited us to make this distinction. This evening, for example, look at Sirius, Vega, and Aldebaran; you see them not as they are but as they no longer are, as they were, — the first, eight years ago, the second, twenty-five years ago, the third, thirty-two years ago. Our actual present coexists with their past. We saw in the heavens, on February 22, 1901, a sidereal conflagration that had taken place about 1551. The stars, as we see them at this moment, no longer exist. The actual time of Jupiter and Saturn is not that of this world.

The metaphysicians are accustomed to associate space and time, which have, in truth, a certain relation, and to attribute common properties to them. That is an error. Space exists in itself. It is absolute, infinite, eternal, even though it may be empty, for emptiness is still pure space. Time, on the contrary, does not exist in itself. It is created by the movements of the stars and the succession of things. If the earth were motionless, if the stars were not possessed of movements, there would be no time, but there would still be space. In the absolute space, between the worlds, there is no time.

I have discussed this question more than once, during fifty years, with our most eminent contemporary philosophers,[10] and I can testify that most of them prefer to sacrifice the possibility of our foreseeing the future rather than sacrifice liberty. They have not surmised that harmony can exist between the two. I hope that this harmony has been established here. In any case we should not, we cannot deny the facts of observation. Let us return to these facts.

There was published in 1912 a French translation of the work of the German philosopher Schopenhauer on “Animal Magnetism and Magic,” published by him at Frankfort, in 1836, as well as related writings on

and fell with him into the ravine, from which he was picked up unconscious. During this fall, which could hardly have lasted two or three seconds, his entire life, from his childhood up to his career in the army, unrolled clearly and slowly in his mind, his games as a boy, his classes, his first communion, his vacations, his different studies, his examinations, his entry at Saint-Cyr in 1848, his life with the dragoons, in the war in Italy, with the lancers of the Imperial Guards, with the spahis, with the riflemen, at the Chateau of Fountainebleu, the balls of the Empress at the Tuileries, etc. All this slow panorama was unrolled before his eyes in less than four seconds, for he recovered consciousness immediately.

[10] See what we have already written above (Chap. IV, p. 116) in regard to a conversation with a French cardinal concerning divine prescience and free will.

spirits and premonitory dreams, published by him in Berlin, in 1851. Here is what we read, in this book:

Dreams often announce important events, but at times also insignificant things, the realization of which is not worth the attention of a thinker. I myself have been convinced of this by an irrefutable experience. I wish to tell of this experience because it clearly exhibits at the same time the rigorous necessity of what happens, even of what is most accidental.

One morning I was writing with great care a long and most important business letter in English. When I reached the end of the third page, I took the inkwell, instead of the sandbox, and poured it over the paper; the ink ran off the desk to the floor. The servant came in at my ring, brought a pail of water, and began to wash the floor to get off the spots. While she was doing this she said: "I dreamed last night that I took some ink spots off here by rubbing the boards."— "That's not true!" I answered her.— "It is true, and I have already told it to the other servant, who sleeps with me."

Just then the other servant, who was about seventeen years old, chanced to come in, to call the one who was washing the boards. I went toward her and asked her: "What did she dream last night?" —Answer: "I don't know." Then I said: "But she told you about it when she woke up." Whereupon the young girl replied: "Oh, yes! she dreamed that she washed an ink spot off the floor here."

This tale, the absolute truth of which I vouch for, places the reality of this sort of dreams beyond doubt. It is no less remarkable because it concerned an act which can be qualified as involuntary, as it occurred entirely against my will, resulting from a very insignificant mistake of my hand. And nevertheless, this act was so necessary and so inevitably determined that its effect existed, several hours in advance, as a dream in the consciousness of another. Here appears m the clearest manner the

truth of my proposition: everything that happens, happens of necessity."[11]

I should not have classed this tale among my positive documents, and I should have left it in the category of doubtful cases (for the testimony of servants is often to be suspected, and more than one takes a certain pleasure in deceiving his master), if Schopenhauer were not the author and if he had not offered it himself in support of his- convictions concerning necessity. He declared he was convinced of the truthfulness of his two servants, and in his mind there was no doubt about the reality of the premonitory dream.

But he was mistaken in the interpretation. He was not at all forced to upset his inkstand. The event was seen because it was what happened.

This story of the German philosopher's servant reminds me of a similar vision of another servant which was told in the review, "Uebersinnliche Welt," of Berlin (August, 1904), which I give:

Monsieur Buchberger, Councilor of Justice, chanced to be at Obermais. One morning at about five o'clock he had a dream, which showed him his house at Olmutz and his servant, her clothes on fire, upon which a stream of water was directed. Next he saw the body of the unfortunate woman, whose skin was still quite white, and then he awoke.

A short time afterward Monsieur Buchberger returned home and when he had reached the house his wife told him that their servant had died as a result of burns. On the same day that he had had his dream, but at ten o'clock in the morning, as she was warming some varnish, it had caught fire and had set fire to the servant's clothes. They had caught her as she ran about the room, flung her to the ground, and succeeded in putting out the fire with water; then she had been taken to a hospital where a few days later she had died.

[11] Schopenhauer, Memoires sur les sciences accultes (Leymaire, editeur), p. 17o.

It is noticeable that this dream occurred at five o'clock in the morning, while the accident did not happen until ten o'clock. This is much the same as the case of Schopenhauer.

The account is signed by Monsieur Buchberger, Councilor of Justice at Graz-Rucherlberg.

The principal fact that ought to strike us and acquire in our eyes the character of a certainty, is simply this paradoxical affirmation, — that the future, which does not yet exist and which will result from the chain of a series of little consecutive causes, can nevertheless be seen as if it had already been realized.

It is not merely in premonitory dreams that the future can be seen, but also in certain states of the soul that are difficult to define. One of the most curious examples that I know of this exact vision of the future is the observation reported by my learned colleague of the Metaphysical Institute, Dr. Geley, whose works are well known to my readers. Here it is, literally:[12]

On June 27, 1894, at about nine o'clock in the morning, Dr. Gallet, who was at the time a student of medicine at Lyons, was working in his room, in the company of a fellow-student, now Dr. Varay, himself a doctor of medicine at Annecy.

At the time Gallet was very much occupied and preoccupied with the preparation for an examination that was about to occur, the first examination for the doctor's degree; and he was not thinking of anything but this examination.

In particular, he took absolutely no interest in politics, gave only a hasty glance to the papers, and in the past few days had discussed only superficially and incidentally the election of the President of the Republic, which was to take place on this very day. The electoral congress was to meet at noon at Versailles.

[12] This has been published with all its details in the annals des Sciences psychiques, October, 1910

All at once, Gallet, who was entirely absorbed in his work, was dictatorially diverted from it by an obsessing thought. An unexpected phrase was imposed on his mind with such force that he could not help writing it down with a pen in his notebook. This phrase was, literally:

"Monsieur Casimir-Perier is elected President of the Republic by 451 votes."

This took place, I repeat, before the meeting of the congress. We must notice, however, a curious thing, the phrase, of which Dr. Gallet has the most distinct memory, indicates the present and not the future.

Stupefied, Dr. Gallet called his comrade Varay and held out to him the paper on which he had just written.

Varay read, shrugged his shoulders and, as his friend, very much interested, became insistent, declaring he believed in the premonition, begged him, a little coldly, to let him work in peace.

After lunch Gallet went out to attend a class at the Faculty. On his way he met two other students, Monsieur Bouchet, now a doctor at Cruseilles, Haute Savoie, and Monsieur Dehorne, now a pharmacist at Thonon. He announced to them that Casimir-Perier would be elected by 451 votes. Despite the laughter and mockery of his comrades, he continued several times to affirm his conviction.

When they came out of the class the four friends met again and went to refresh themselves on the terrace of a neighboring cafe. At this moment the newsboys arrived with the special editions which announced the result of the presidential election, crying:

"Monsieur Casimir-Perier is elected by four hundred and fifty-one votes!"

We can assuredly believe the word of Dr. Geley. But he has been careful to add to his tale irrefutable confirmations, the signed statements of the witnesses:

1 The affidavit of Dr. Varay, former intern at the hospitals of Lyons.

2 The affidavit of Monsieur Deborne, pharmacist at Thonon.

3 The affidavit of Dr. Bouchet, physician at Cruseilles.

Therefore, no one is justified in disputing this event.

It is well to notice that the election of Casimir-Perier, by a majority of only twenty-eight votes[13], was unexpected and that people had rather counted on the success of Monsieur Brisson or of Monsieur Dupuy.

To see in this only another simple coincidence passes the limits of a reasonable skepticism. These cases strengthen one another. If there were only one, isolated and lost in the number of possibilities, we might doubt. But such a mass as we have proved here leaves in the mind the absolute certainty of the reality of these previsions, however inexplicable they appear in the present state of science.

Here, also, the involuntary medium saw what happened; but the election of Casimir-Perier was not inevitable, for all that. Each one of the 945 voters certainly made his influence felt, even more than Schopenhauer did when he upset his ink; each one acted according to his judgment. This very example is a piece of typical evidence against fatality.

Let us continue our free examination.

Monsieur Cesar de Vesme, the learned director of the “Annales des Sciences psychiques,” told me in 1901 of the following extraordinary prediction:

In the first days of the year 1865, a certain Vincent Sassaroli went to live at Sarteano, a commune of 6,000 inhabitants.

As there existed in this neighborhood a good musical band composed of thirty-four performers, Monsieur Joseph Frontini who was in charge,

[13] Here is the official result of the ballot:
Votes taken 845
Absolute majority 423
Obtained:
Casimir-Perier (elected) . . 451
Brisson 195
Dupuy 97
General Fevrier 53
Others 22

being obliged to flee the country for political reasons, invited him to become the director of it.

Monsieur Sassaroli accepted the offer, and he was at once presented to this body of musicians, in the room where they practiced, on the third floor of a house belonging to Canon Dom Bacherini. After the rehearsal and in the presence of the whole society, he announced to Monsieur Frontini that the apartment in which they were was going to crumble with the rest of the building, from the roof down to the ground floor; he added that he seemed to see the debris of the ruined house bury and crush all those present, including himself.

At these words they all looked at one another speechless, wondering whether the new director were joking or if he had gone mad; but Monsieur Sassaroli, imperturbable, insisted on mentioning the very day and hour on which the catastrophe would take place.

At these last words those present no longer doubted that the unhappy man was out of his mind. They withdrew laughing.

Naturally this absurd story spread at once through the country and every one laughed immoderately.

At this, Monsieur Frontini, seeing that Sassaroli had become a laughing-stock and still persuaded that his fixed idea would lead him straight into madness, made every effort to bring him back to reason. With the consent of Canon Joseph Bacherini, he had the building in question carefully examined from roof to foundations by architectural experts, who declared that the house did not show the least sign of deterioration. Fortified by this judgment, he reported it to Monsieur Sassaroli, counseling him to insist no longer on his foolish prediction, and wishing him as long a life as that of the solid building of which they were speaking.

It was labor lost: Monsieur Sassaroli answered that he could not share the wish, as in that case he would have only four days left to live.

Such obstinacy could only increase the doubts as to the maestro's sanity, and they began to keep an eye on him and to watch him, lest he should commit some enormity.

In the cafes, in the homes, people spoke of nothing but this nonsense, which made the whole countryside laugh.

At last the great day arrived. In the evening, as it happened to be one of the days fixed for practice, the musicians came together in the room as their custom was, and while they were waiting for the director they passed their time laughing at him. Monsieur Sassaroli soon arrived and, refusing to hear of work that evening, very much agitated because the hour of the catastrophe was approaching, he protested to such purpose that he succeeded in persuading all those who were present to leave. As they went down the stairway, which was built over massive arches, Monsieur Sassaroli, who went ahead of them all, repeated continually: "Gently, walk gently, the weight of all of us might hasten the fall."

We can imagine the jokes and laughter of these thirty-four persons, who, feeling convinced that they were following a madman and taking part in an absurd farce, went down the long flights of steps, one after another. At last they came out into the street. A few moments later, and at exactly the hour foretold, the house crumbled from top to bottom.

We can all picture to ourselves the sensation such an event created in the countryside.

The report from which we have taken this abridged account, was written by Monsieur Joseph Frontini, whose father, the president of the municipality, had been the first to congratulate Monsieur Sassaroli the day after the catastrophe. There are also three affidavits, the first from all the members of the family with whom Monsieur Sassaroli lodged, the second from the guardian of the theater; and the third from the family living in the house adjoining the theater, all certifying to the event.

Really, how can one still doubt in the presence of an occurrence so absolutely convincing? Would it not be a case for applying to the

incredulous the biblical stigma: Oculos habent et non vident; aures habent et non audiunt, “Eyes have they and see not, ears have they and hear not”? To deny, always to deny, to deny notwithstanding: what does that prove?

Very well, let us be still unsatisfied: we have not the weight of enough proof in our scales. Here is more weight.

One of the most astonishing examples of the exact vision of the future that I know of, one of the strangest and most characteristic, of those due to hypnotic lucidity, is this, reported by Dr. Alphonse Teste in his “Manuel pratique du magnetisme universel ” This is not a work of yesterday, as it was published in 1841, but it is nonetheless valuable for, as Moliere says, time has nothing to do with the matter. Here is this truly fantastic case:

On Friday, the eighth of last May, I hypnotized Madame Hortense M—. On the day of which I speak, this lady was in a state of admirable lucidity. I was alone with her and her husband, and she seemed especially preoccupied with her personal future. Among other unexpected things she said this to us:

“I have been pregnant for fifteen days, but the child will not be born at the proper time; this causes me bitter grief. On next Tuesday, the twelfth of the present month, I shall be frightened by something and fall, and as a result I shall have a miscarriage.”

I confess that in spite of all I have seen, one of the points in this prophecy roused my senses.

“What will you be afraid of, Madame!” I asked, with an expression of interest that was far from feigned.

“I don’t know at all.”

“But from what direction will it come? Where will you fall?”

“I cannot tell you, I know nothing about it.”

“Is there no way of avoiding all this?”

“None.”

“If, however, we should not leave you?”

“It will make no difference.”

“And will you be very ill?”

“Yes, for three days.”

“Do you know exactly what will happen to you?”

“On Tuesday, at half-past three, just after I have been frightened, I shall have a fainting-fit which will last eight minutes. Afterward, I shall be seized with violent pains in my back that will last all the rest of the day and continue all night. Wednesday morning I shall begin to lose blood. This flow will increase rapidly and become very abundant.

However, there is nothing to worry about, for it will not kill me. On Thursday morning I shall be much better, I shall even be able to leave my bed for almost the whole day, but at about half-past five in the evening I shall have a new loss of blood thath will be followed by delirium. Thursday night will be good, but by Friday night I shall be quite out of my head.”

Madame Hortense said no more, and without taking everything she said literally, we were so much impressed, that we did not dream of questioning her further. Nevertheless her husband, who was very much disturbed, asked her with indescribable anxiety if she would be out of her head for long.

“For three days,” she answered with perfect calm.

Then she added with a sweetness that was full of grace: “Come, don’t be anxious! I shall not stay out of my head and I shall not die; I shall suffer, that’s all.”

Madame Hortense was awakened, and, as is usual, retained no memory of what had happened. When I was alone with her husband, I especially urged him to keep secret from his wife all these occurrences that, although they were perhaps imaginary, would be quite capable of depressing her painfully if she were aware of them; besides, in the interests of science, it was important for her to be left in ignorance of

them. Monsieur H— promised everything, and I know his character well enough to feel sure that he kept his promise. As for me, I had carefully taken notes of all the predicted events, and the next day I had occasion to speak of them to Dr. Amedee Latour.

The fatal Tuesday arrived; fear for Madame H— was the only thing that occupied me. When I reached their home she was lunching with her husband and seemed in the best possible spirits.

"My good friends," I said as I entered, "I am at your disposal until evening, if it does not disturb you."

"You are heartily welcome," answered Madame Hortense, "but on one condition, which is that you will not talk too much about hypnotism."

"Madame, I will not speak of it at all, if you will consent to sleep for me only ten minutes."

She accepted, and shortly after lunch I put her to sleep.

"How are you, Madame?"

"Very well, Monsieur, but not for long."

"How is that?"

She repeated her conclusive statement of Friday: "Between three and four o'clock, I shall be frightened by something, I shall fall, a copious loss of blood will result."

"What will frighten you?"

"I don't know."

"Nevertheless, try to find out."

"I know nothing about it."

"Is there no way to escape this fatality?"

"None."

"This evening, Madame, I shall be able to contradict you."

“This evening, doctor, you will be very anxious about my health, for I shall be very ill.”

I had nothing to answer to that, for the moment. It was necessary to wait and I waited.

When she was awakened a few minutes later, Madame Hortense remembered nothing; her face, which had been saddened by the visions of her dream, took on again all its natural serenity. As she had done before she went to sleep, she talked and jested with us, with no mental reservations, and once more resumed those gay sallies which were so natural to her and which she knew so well how to utter. As for me, I was in a state of mind impossible to describe: I was lost among conjectures and hypotheses that sometimes shook my faith: I suspected everything, I suspected myself.

Having quite made up our minds not to leave her for a second, we kept watch of her least movements; we closed the windows tightly for fear some accident occurring in the street or in the neighboring houses should make the prophecy come true. Finally, if any one rang, one of us went into the hall to see who it was.

It was a little after half-past three. Madame Hortense, who was much astonished at the little attentions with which she saw herself beset and who could not penetrate the mystery of our precautions, said to us, as she rose from the arm-chair in which we had made her sit down:

“Will you permit me, gentlemen, to remove myself a moment from your inconceivable solicitude ^“

“Where do you intend to go, madame?” I cried, with an air of anxiety which I could not hide.

“But, good heavens, Monsieur, what is the matter with you? Do you think I have plans of suicide?”

“No, Madame, but—”

“But what?”

“But what? I know I am indiscreet, but the truth is I am concerned over your health.”

“Then, Doctor,” she answered laughing, “all the more reason for letting me go out!”

I understood.

The reason was plausible, there was but little ground for insisting. Nevertheless, my friend wished to see the thing through and said to his wife:

“Will you permit me to go with you as far as there?”

“What! So it’s a wager then?”

“Precisely, Madame, a wager between us, which I shall certainly win, although you have sworn ‘to make me lose.”

Madame Hortense looked from one to the other of us and remained dumbfounded! She accepted the arm her husband offered her and went out with a peal of laughter.

I laughed also, yet for all that I felt I know not what presentiment that the decisive moment had come. It is so true that this idea had taken possession of me that I did not dream of reentering the drawing room but stayed like a Swiss at the door of the antechamber where I had no reason to be.

All at once there was a piercing cry and the sound of a body falling on the landing. I dashed upstairs. At the door of the bathroom my friend held his wife fainting in his arms.

It was indeed she who had cried out. The noise I had heard had been that of her fall. At the moment when she had left the arm of her husband to enter the room, she had suddenly come upon a rat — there where they swore they had never seen a single one in twenty years — and had been so suddenly and terribly frightened that she had fallen backward, without its being possible to catch her.

After that events took place as she had foretold they would.

Who, after such happenings, would still dare to set a limit to what is possible or to define human life?

We cannot doubt the veracity of the author. He was himself too profoundly impressed by this stupefying clairvoyance for us to fall to be as impressed as he. To deny everything, as is often done, would be to deny the whole history of humanity.

Was I not right in calling it one of the most extraordinary eases in the whole series that we are studying at this moment, and which is so rich in variety? Here also, it is impossible to apply the banal explanation of chance. At the most one might suppose that the sick imagination of the narrator produced everything through subconscious autosuggestion, and that she herself created this future that she saw; but what an untenable hypothesis! — a hypothesis, for that matter, diametrically opposed to the preceding case, the collapse of the theater, as well as to those that follow.

It is certainly quite right for us to receive cautiously the accounts of persons who assure us that they have foreseen extraordinary events: for all that, there has been evidence that it is impossible to doubt, and to this class belongs an account, rather banal, but curious in a way, which was brought in by my friend, Colonel Rochas, and which happened to our famous surgeon, Baron Larrey, who told it to him. All in one night he dreamed four numbers for the lottery and the next morning, as he was in haste to begin his calls, he asked Madame Larrey to make the bets on them herself. But what was his annoyance, when he returned home, to find that the numbers had appeared — and that his commission had been forgotten!

It is impossible to attribute this coincidence to chance, the player had 2,555,189 chances against him.

One number, yes; perhaps even two, but four! Today we know that the future can be seen.

This event is as interesting as the preceding ones. I used to know Baron Larrey, as distinguished as a man of the world as he was honest as a scholar. His testimony is that of a man of honor.

Let us notice, in this connection, that the examples that I am submitting to the impartial attention of my readers have the most diverse origins. It is not merely a question of premonitory dreams, or of divinations in a state of somnambulism, or of palmistry, or of fortune-telling with cards, or of any special series whatever. All the forms of brain activity are

represented, as are all social conditions and all countries. It would therefore be impossible to object that there was any suggestive influence of any sort whatever.

Let us continue our study.

One of the most tragic examples of premonitory dreams of death that I know is that of Dr. de Sermyn, of the death of his own son. Let us hear his account of it:

My first child was just beginning his fourth year. I had a quite particular attachment for him, such as I have felt for none of my other children. His glance and his smile seemed to me angelic, and I believed his intelligence was exceptional for his age. He was my joy and my consolation, and the thought that I was to see him and talk with him, when I returned home, filled me with happiness. I forgot then all my fatigue and care.

One night I dreamed that I was holding the child in my arms before a lighted stove. Suddenly he slipped, I know not how, and fell into the flames. Instead of hastening to pull him out of the fire I precipitately closed the stove doors.

What led me to act thus was the following reasoning. I said to myself: "If I pull the child out of the fire, he will die in a few days in frightful suffering, because of his many and deep burns; but if I close the stove he will die quickly, perhaps in a minute, in any case he will not suffer long."

Strange and stupidly cruel reasoning, but in my dream this idea seemed luminous to me and my act a duty.

When I had thus closed the two doors of the stove I heard, with inexpressible anguish, the movements of the child roasting inside.

"Oh, my God !" I said, "make him die quickly! I cannot bear to hear him suffer."

I awoke with a start, my forehead bathed in cold sweat, my heart beating madly. I first sat down on my bed, saying: "Thank heaven it is only a dream!"

Then I ran into the child's room. He was sleeping peacefully. His breathing was regular, his pulse normal, his skin fresh. Nevertheless, I tried in vain to calm myself. It was useless to say to myself: "Imbecile, donkey, it is only a dream, the child is wonderfully well."—"Go back to bed, then, and sleep," said the voice of my reason. I went to bed but without being able to conquer my anxiety, without being able to get rid of an evil presentiment. The first thing I did, when I awoke in the morning, was to go and examine the child. He talked, he was gay, he was bursting with health.

"Go and work," said the mocking voice of my conscious self; "there is nothing the matter with the child; your dream was stupid. Does one throw one's child into the stove and, when it is in, shut it in that it may die the more quickly?"

How could I guess that my subconscious mind, which said nothing but tormented me, obsessed me, possessed the truth and knew what was going to happen?

In the morning the child awoke gay and happy, as usual; he ate breakfast with a good appetite and I went out reassured.

I returned home about noon. The child was lying on a couch, drowsy. His pulse was rapid, his skin burning, his breathing quick. I was very much disturbed. My wife noticed it and questioned me anxiously, but I restrained myself and tried to hide my secret alarm. Nevertheless, I began to listen attentively to the little boy's breathing and I was able to detect the existence of bronchitis that extended to both lungs, as well as a slight crepitation at their base. At this I could not help exclaiming, "It is serious, very serious! I believe the child is lost."

Just then a doctor, who was related to us, was passing on horseback. My wife rushed to the window and called him.

"Doctor," she said when he entered, "I beg you to examine our child, who is ill; my husband says he is lost."

Dr. W— was the fashionable practitioner of the moment. He was an excellent talker, rather witty, and not exactly tender toward the young doctors for whom he did not seem to have much respect.

He examined the child, smiling. "And how long has he been ill?" he asked.

"Hardly an hour, Doctor," cried my wife. "This morning he was perfectly well."

"And Monsieur thinks he is lost?" he asked, pointing to me. Ah! these young men!"

"Come," he went on, addressing me, "you can have no serious reason for alarming a mother in this way. This child has hardly been ill an hour, and your diagnosis as well as your prognosis is already made. That isn't reasonable.

"Nonsense, Madame, calm yourself," he added, addressing my wife. "Put the child to bed, give him something hot to drink, cover him up well, try to make him perspire, and I will stop in during the evening."

I understood perfectly the absurdity of my conduct, and how ridiculous I must appear in the eyes of the celebrated doctor, but how could I confess that I was acting through belief in a dream! He would have taken me for a simpleton.

I lowered my head without replying to his just reproaches, but as he-was about to leave I exclaimed, "I beg you, Doctor, not to fail to return this evening."

Was it the beseeching tone of my voice which struck him'? He stopped, looked at me fixedly for a few seconds, and then went slowly toward the child and began to examine him a second time, more attentively than at first.

Without doubt he said to himself: "Here is a father who is a doctor, and who seems to be very anxious over the state of his child. Has he discovered some terrifying symptom which has escaped me?"

When he had finished his examination, he said to me: "It's quite true one can distinguish, here and there, a few hissing rattles in both lungs, and

you seem to believe that serious bronchial pneumonia is about to appear. But at this moment we cannot be certain of any such eventuality. All that we can actually say is that there exists light bronchial pneumonia which may perfectly well disappear in a few days. But even if we admitted the beginning of bronchial pneumonia, what reason would you have to say that the child was lost! All cases of bronchial pneumonia are not fatal. Come, be reasonable. I will return."

Despite all the care of Dr. W— the state of the child grew worse hourly. On the fourth day he was choking desperately.

When I saw him suffering so cruelly and foresaw the end, I experienced the same anguish which I had felt in my dream. I said once more, in my heart: "My God! make him die quickly! If this agony lasts it will drive me mad."

Since this dream, which announced the death of my son George, nothing has been able to take away the conviction that our mind acquires, during sleep, the power of foreseeing certain future events.

But whence came the form under which the prediction of my child's death was produced? Why the stove into which I dropped my child'? Why this strange mise-en-scene? Whence came the idea of closing the doors so that he might die more quickly? This act cannot be reconciled with the horror I felt in performing it.

I have often thought about this and here is the most probable explanation I can find:

I had gone to bed very late, on that night. I had been reading, stretched out in an armchair before a fire, which I often stirred. My nerves had evidently kept the impression of the burning coals and of a stove with two doors that one could open and shut at will. It seems to me that we can attribute to this excitation of the brain the illusion of a blazing stove in which my child writhed and which I tried to close in order to put an end to his agony.

This premonitory dream clearly shows our dual mentality. We do not like to put our faith in a dream, especially when it foretells something

disagreeable. Reason revolts in such a case, without, however, being able to dominate the profound and anguished feeling of the subconscious.[14]

The narrator adds that he has often thought of this struggle between his conscious and his subconscious self. The latter was sure that the dream would inevitably be realized. However, reason revolted against it and clung to a wavering hope, as a man flung in the ocean grasps a floating bit of wreckage.

Our secret intuitions often have their reason for being, and we are wrong to despise them without seeking for their cause. A presentiment might at times be a forgotten dream.

Whatever may be the explanation, the fact is there, as it has been observed, irrefutable. This father was impressed by a physiological state, at the time unknown, of his child, and believed in advance in his inevitable death. This is a very characteristic proof of the human soul's power of premonition, of the existence of a real psychic world, suggesting the conclusion that the apparent vital organism is not all. There is something indefinable in us that we ourselves do not recognize.

An abominably dramatic event — the exact vision, in a dream, just six hours in advance, of the accidental death of his son, crushed by an automobile, on the very day when he was going to pass his baccalaureate examination, after brilliant work in his studies, and when he was in excellent health — was described to me in a long letter by one of my oldest readers. This dream had shown him all the details of the accident—the carrying away of the body, the appearance of the wounds, and the despair of the family—as clearly as in a photograph, or rather a cinematograph. (Letter 2218.)

At the earnest request of the afflicted family, I shall limit myself here to mentioning the case of the premonition, for our general instruction, without indicating names or over-painful circumstances. But I must say that this living drama, in itself alone, eliminates all the explanations of so-called coincidences and would suffice to prove that at times the future is foreseen with the most absolute precision.

[14] Contribution a l'etude de facultes cerebrales meconnues, p.29.

I am sure that my readers will agree with me if I say that from now on the denial of these facts will prove only the ignorance of those who deny them or their unreasonable obstinacy.

A premonitory vision, equally remarkable, of a coming event was told me by an attentive observer of these unexplained phenomena. The author wrote me:

This was a sort of premonitory waking dream, and I think I ought to tell you of it, because it may add a bit of evidence to what you are already collecting for your important researches. You yourself may judge of its value.

Quite recently, in a drawing room, when the conversation turned on those psychic studies of which you are making so thorough an examination, a lady who is one of our relatives told us the following story:

"Once when I was leaning out of my balcony, I suddenly saw myself in the street in deep mourning, following a hearse. The impression was so strong that I went to my dressmaker the same day to revoke the order for a dress, as I could not stop thinking: 'Some great misfortune is going to happen to me.' Well, four days later, my child, a little boy four years old, fell from the top of the staircase and was instantly killed."

This was what I heard with my own ears, from a woman in mourning, still under the impression of what had happened to her. There could not have been any question of error or imposture.

P. Drevet,

Lieutenant in the 14th Infantry, at Grenoble. (Letter 985.)

This principle often takes the form of a communication from a spirit through a medium, as if this spirit saw the future exactly, especially the death of the subject in question. My regretted colleague and friend William Stead, editor of "The Review of Reviews," who was a victim of

the shipwreck of the Titanic, received one day, from his “spirit Julia,” a singularly astounding prediction. He wrote:[15]

A few years ago, I had as an employee a lady of truly remarkable talent, but of a variable character and of less than robust health. She became so impossible that in January I was seriously thinking of letting her go, when “Julia” wrote by my hand: “Be patient with E. M. She will come and join us here before the end of the year.”

I was stupefied, for nothing led me to suppose that she was going to die. I followed the advice, saying nothing of the message, and continued to employ this lady. It was, if I remember rightly, about the fifteenth or sixteenth of January that this warning was given me.

It was repeated to me in February, March, April, May, and June:

“Remember that E. M. will have ceased to live before the end of the year.”

In July she swallowed, by accident, a small tack. It lodged in the intestines and she fell seriously ill. The two doctors who cared for her had no hope of saving her. In the interval “Julia” wrote to me with my hand.

“Without doubt,” I said to her, “this is what you foresaw when you warned me that she would die.”

To my extreme surprise, the answer was: “No, she will recover from this, but all the same, she will succumb before the end of the year.”

E. M. recovered suddenly, to the great astonishment of the doctors, and was soon able to take up again her accustomed work. In August, September, October, and November word of her approaching death was again sent me by the help of my hand. In December she was seized with influenza.

“Is it this?” I asked “Julia.”

[15] Annales des Sciences psychiques, 1909, p. 120

"No, in this case it will not come from a natural cause; but whatever it is, it will come before the end of the year."

I was alarmed, but I knew I could not hinder the event. The year passed and she still lived. "Julia" wrote: "I may have been mistaken by a few days, but what I said is true."

Toward the tenth of January, "Julia" wrote me: "You will see E. M. tomorrow; say good-by to her. Make all the necessary arrangements. You will never see her again on this earth."

I went to find her. She was feverish, with a bad cough. They were about to take her to a hospital.

Two days later I received a telegram informing me that she had flung herself from a window of the fourth floor, in an access of delirium, and had been picked up dead. The date had over-passed, by a few days, the twelvemonth of which the first message had spoken.

I am able to prove the authenticity of this tale by the manuscripts of the original messages themselves, as well as by the signed affidavits of my two secretaries.

It would seem, indeed, that the "spirit" must have known in advance the time of her death and even that this death would be accidental. But can the prediction be surely attributed to a spirit? This is not proved. I knew Stead well enough to have noticed his rare psychic powers, although he did not make use of them for his own security.

This premonition is assuredly most remarkable. Who is this "Julia," so well known to the psychics who have kept up with Stead's writings? A spirit? The subconscious? Special mental faculties? We do not know. But it is not the material of the brain that sees the future in this way.

In his work "Lucidite et intuition," which is so judiciously thought out and so carefully certified, Dr. Eugene Osty has given on his part the following case of intuitive auto-perception:

Madame D—, a lucid subject, who was given to automatic writing, was astonished, at a certain period of her life, to see that her hand continually traced the word "R—," a name which she had never heard and which seemed to her to have no significance. For several months, in the midst of her occupations, whether her hand was lying on a table or whether she was getting ready to write a letter, the same word was traced. She ended by considering this involuntary movement just a bad habit, and paid no attention to it.

One evening her husband told her that he had just signed, on the spur of the moment, a contract as engineer at R—, a small town in the province of Oran.

Later her hand began to write "June." Madame D— then tried to get some explanation of this date, by means of automatic writing. The only reply to her questions was always "June." June arrived and Madame D— had the sorrow of seeing her husband die.

Then, soon after, her hand obstinately traced this other date: "March." We can imagine the terror that was then felt by this unhappy intuitive woman, who wondered with what other terrible blow destiny would strike her. Believing that in the automatic writing her hand was the slave of some disincarnated spirit, she addressed the most urgent prayers to the occult being, begging to be spared the agony of the mysterious menace. And her hand, in reply to the torture of her heart, still wrote the single word "March."

The fatal and dreaded period arrived. In the same month Madame D— lost her daughter and her mother.

This mysterious history greatly resembles the preceding one. There are many similar cases which I lack space to include here. Can they be explained, the ones by the others? Subconsciousness? Psychic force? External spirit? Destiny? What word ought our ignorance to apply to them?

The following account of a singular warning was sent me by a young student of Morbihan:

Dear Master:

It is my duty to let you know of a premonition that has occurred in our family.

In 1896, my grandfather, Commandant Dufilhol, officer of the Legion of Honor, who met you in the home of Monsieur Allan Kardec in 1862, was living, with my mother, near Vannes.

One day he was going down the entrance stairs of the chateau, by himself, to rejoin Mama at the stables.

Suddenly a voice said at his ear: "A death in the family."

Surprised and agitated, my grandfather thought: "It is I. I am the eldest."

"No," answered the voice, "Adolphe Planes. "

My grandfather arrived at the stables so pale that my mother asked him if he felt ill. He answered no, and told her of the warning that he had just received.

Both of them, very much saddened, wrote for news of Adolphe Planes, my young uncle, who at the time was professor of English at Nice.

The reply was satisfactory, and my relatives were somewhat reassured.

Two months later, my uncle passed his examination for a fellowship; the test had been hard and fatiguing. At the moment when the examiner said to him, "Monsieur Planes, you are received, with all our congratulations," my poor uncle swayed and lost consciousness.

Eight days later he died of meningitis, in the arms of my grandfather.

He was twenty-six years old. The voice had not been mistaken.

The memory of her brother's premature death is still so cruelly painful to my mother that she would never have authorized me to write if it had not been as a help to your researches.

Adrian Dufilhol, Saint-Raoul-Guer: August 3, 1918. (Letter 4042.)

Premonitory auditions are more rare than premonitory visions, but their number is large enough for us to lack the right to deny them. To attribute them to chance is no more satisfactory.

Several readers wrote me from New York, in August, 1919, that the accident to Mr. William Cooper, the celebrated manufacturer, who was crushed by a trolley car, had been seen from Philadelphia by his mother, Mrs. Ella Cooper.

Twice that very night, she dreamed that she saw her son falling in the street, crushed in this fashion, and this repeated dream had so alarmed her that she could not prevent herself from taking the train from Philadelphia to New York. Exactly at the hour of her arrival, in the morning, having taken a Thirty-Fourth Street car, as she was crossing Seventh Avenue she saw a crowd about a man who had just been run over by a trolley car. It was her son.

These letters read: “This accident which will probably result in the death of Mr. William Cooper.” Did death follow? I do not know; but the premonitory dream is no less remarkable.

We can have no doubt that this mother was warned of what was about to happen to her. How? By whom? By what? By what means? That is the object of the researches in this book.

There it was a mother who saw her son run down. Here is an experience somewhat similar, which took place by means of an intermediary. The following account was sent me from Biarritz, July 9, 1917, in reply to the desire that I had expressed to Madame Storms Castelot, my learned colleague of the Astronomical Society of France, who had told me the dream, to receive a firsthand account from the one who had experienced it. It was the vision, three days in advance, of a sudden death.

Extract:

In spite of all the sadness that such a communication awakes in me, I can solemnly declare to you that the death of my son Jean was announced to me on the Thursday before the Sunday on which my dear

child, who was abroad with his brother Louis, left us for ever. Here is this very simple dream:

I saw, in an unknown house, my son Louis in tears, and when I asked him the reason for his grief, he answered me: "Oh! Mama, Jean is dead!" My dear child was nineteen years old, superbly well, and nothing could have led us to foresee so terrible an end! An embolism, during a peaceful bicycle ride, in company with his brother and an uncle. Long after, I learned that the Thursday on which I had had this frightful presentiment, my child had had an attack of fainting, caused by a cut in his finger—a strange coincidence!

Another strange coincidence; this last concerns myself.

Once when I happened to be in Hamburg, on one of my numerous concert tours, I was seized on the morning of one of the concerts with such a frightful pain in the neck that it threatened to prevent my keeping my engagement for the evening. I hurried off to a medical specialist who treated these disagreeable little ailments with electricity. But almost at once I fainted from the effects of running. The same day I received a telegram from Paris, from my mother, telling of her anxiety on seeing me in a faint in a dream. That astonished me! In fact, my mother had all her life a veritable gift of second sight, as the expression goes.

B. Marx-Goldschmidt.

(Letter 3750.)

This letter was countersigned by the brother of the dead man.

We see that these sorts of intuitions were not rare in this family. The same is true of the following case.

It was from the Argentine Republic that I received the story of the remarkable premonitory dream given here:

Rosario de Santa Fe; September 15, 1899.

I think it is my duty, illustrious Master, to report to you the following event which quite certainly took place in my family, and which may help bring you light that you will later spread through the world.

One of my great-aunts was noted for her presentiments and mental visions.

In 1868 she saw in a dream an interior that was a whole revelation. This tableau represented an apartment, where one of her friends, Madame B—, seated in an arm-chair near a fireplace in which blazed a great fire, was caressing a small child which she held in her arms, while a servant dried some linen before the flames. This dream was related to several persons without any one's thinking much about it, for Madame B—, the mother of a numerous family, had passed her fortieth year, and as she had had no children for seven years she did not appear likely to have any more.

However, what had at first seemed impossible was realized a year later and one evening when my great aunt was going to congratulate the mother on the birth of her last born, she saw in reality her former dream. The apartment, the arrangement of the furniture, the lighted chimney, the servant drying clothes before the fire—in short, all the details of the dream—were faithfully reproduced. The prophecy had been entirely fulfilled.

Accept, Monsieur, the respectful homage of your far-away reader and my best wishes for you and for our dear France.

Emilio Becher, At Rosario de Santa Fe, Argentine Republic.

(Letter 799.)

Still another occurrence.

I received from Sweden, in December, 1899, the following story from a well-known Protestant minister:

There is here, at this moment, a visitation of the bishops. One of the persons who was to have been present last week at this reunion (the

meeting of the bishops was to have begun on Tuesday, the third of December, in the parish of Sjustorp, at Medelpad) dreamed on the night of the preceding Saturday that he was called to the telephone and that a minister from Medelpad, who gave his name, told him that there would be no visitation on that day, as some one had just died. But whoever it was that telephoned him from the world of dreams did not tell him the name of the person who had died. The dreamer remembered all this very clearly the next morning. What was his amazement when at noon he actually learned, by telephone, that the wife of the bishop had died suddenly that very morning, and that the visitation could not take place, as this period of mourning would prevent his fulfilling his duties as a visitor.

(Letter 854.)

What was the agent of this psychic phenomenon?

The dead woman! That is not probable. The minister, who made his communication in a dream over a so-called telephone? Perhaps. But by what mental current, by what process? The thought of the bishop himself, radiating afar? Mysteries of telepathy?

Still another case as tragic as that of Dr. de Sermyn: Dr. Foissac tells us[16] how one evening in the spring of 1854, the Abbe Deguerry, the cure of the Madeleine, the Count of Las Cases, a senator, Messieurs Longet and Marshall-Hall, of the Academy of Sciences, had a very animated discussion in his salon on the marvelous and on prophetic visions, and that the last of these four persons related the following:

A year ago, when I was in Edinburgh, I went out into the neighboring countryside to visit one of my old friends, Mr. Holmes. I found every face full of sadness. Mr. Holmes had that very day been present at a burial at a castle in the neighborhood; he told me that the son of the master of the castle had often frightened his family by manifestations which they attributed to second sight. At times they saw him gay or sad

[16] La Chance ou la Destinee (Paris, 1876), p. 544.

without cause, his glance profoundly melancholy, uttering words without meaning, or describing strange visions. They tried, but in vain, to combat this disposition by a great deal of exercise and a system of varied studies, in accordance with the advice of a very enlightened doctor.

Eight days before, when the family was all together, they had suddenly seen young William, who was barely twelve years old, turn pale and become motionless; they listened and heard these words: "I see a child asleep, lying in a velvet box with a sheet of white satin and wreaths and flowers all around. Why are my parents weeping? That child is I. " Filled with terror, the father and mother seized their son, whom they covered with tears and kisses. He came to himself and devoted himself with high spirits to games suitable to his age.

The week had not passed when the family, seated in the shade, after lunch, looked for William, who had been there a moment before. They did not see him and called; no voice answered. The family, the tutor, the doctor, the chaplain, the servants searched all over the park; there was a medley of a thousand cries of distress: William had disappeared. After an hour of search and anguish, the child was found in a pond where he had been drowned while trying to seize a boat that the wind had driven away from the bank. For several hours they did everything possible to bring him back to life. The fatal prediction was fulfilled.

We shall have occasion, in the second part of this work, abounding with records, to return to these phenomena accompanying death; but we are confining ourselves here to the study of the metaphysical events bearing witness to the transcendent faculties of the soul. This child had, from all the evidence, seen his coffin.

What is also one of the most singular premonitions of death can be read in the autobiography of Baron Lazare Helleinbach. Here it is, as we find it in the "Annales des Sciences psychiques," 1877 (page 124).

I had the intention of asking the collaboration of the chief of the chemical department of the geological institution at Vienna, Monsieur Hauer, director of mines, concerning some researches that I had made in crystallography. I had spoken to him of it incidentally, as the laboratory

was near my home and Hauer was well known in the scientific world—we may say throughout the whole of Europe—as an expert in his subject. I had always put off my visit, but finally I decided to make it the following morning. That very night I dreamed. I saw a man, pale and trembling, supported by the arms, by two men.

I paid no attention to this dream and I went to the geological institution; but as the laboratory was in a different place from where it had been in former years, I mistook the door, and, finding the right door locked, I looked through a window and saw the exact scene shown in my dream; they were supporting Hauer, who had just poisoned himself with cyanide of potassium; they were carrying him into the vestibule, just as I had dreamed.

Baron Hellembach adds the following observations:

If I had arrived a few minutes earlier, I could surely have prevented this act, as the suicide was caused by family and money troubles, and my proposition would have given Hauer a new phase of work as well as material help. This circumstance stirred me deeply; the more so because I understood the great loss I had sustained from the point of view of my ideas and my plans, and realized that my efforts had gone for naught.

It is quite natural that this death, which swept away my plans, should have made a deep impression on me; it was perhaps for this reason that on my awakening, my consciousness should have kept a fragment of clairvoyance.

From the point of view of telepathy, we might think that the suicide, who had very probably premeditated his desperate act during the night which preceded it, had provoked the dream of Baron Hellembach. But -this would not explain the essential element of the dream, the sight of a man with a livid face, dying, supported by the arms by two other men.

To introduce once more the hypothesis of chance events would really be too much.

We can remark here that all these facts show more and more clearly the truth of our affirmation that the soul can see the future by means of occult powers. Still another case of premonition, no less moving, occurred in 1905 in the Republic of San Marino.

A certain Marino Tonelli, twenty-seven years old, who used to sell eggs, was in the habit of visiting all the neighboring markets, among others that of Rimini. The evening of June 13th, as he happened to be in that last-named town, he made the mistake of taking too many drinks,—a thing which, in fact, was not usual with him. He returned home in his modest wagon, fortunately with his egg-baskets empty. It appears that the young merchant was almost sunk in a stupor, for when he had reached a certain spot known as Costo di Borgo, where the road is tortuous and descends rapidly, he felt a violent shock and found himself stretched out in a field at the bottom of a little ravine, down which he had rolled. He saw then that the wagon was half overturned on the edge of the road, and the home, almost suspended in the air, was struggling while in a very critical position. As soon as he found he was not hurt, the young man seized the animal and with the help of some persons who had run up, managed to pull the wagon also out of the ravine.

While the business of rescue was going on, what should appear before the eyes of Monsieur Tonelli but the figure of a woman who, in the moonlight, seemed to be his mother. Great was the young man's astonishment; he could no longer doubt when he heard her dear voice and felt himself embraced by the old woman. She wept with relief, asked him if he had not hurt himself and added: "I saw you. Your wife and the two children were already asleep, but I, I felt an agitation, a strange, extraordinary uneasiness, which I could not explain to myself. All at once, I saw this road appear before me, exactly this spot, with the ravine at the side; I saw the wagon overturned and you flung into the field; you called me to help you, you prayed, and seemed to be dying! This last is not true, thank God; but all the rest is just as I saw it. In short, I felt the irresistible need to come here, and without awakening any one, bracing myself against the fear of the loneliness, the darkness,

and the stormy weather, here I am after having walked four kilometers; I should have walked a thousand to come and help you."

The editor of the "Messaggiero," who published this tale, ends it by saying: "Such were the exact facts as I heard them from the lips, still trembling with emotion, of these good people."

Following this publication in the "Messaggiero" an inquiry was made by Professor A. Francisci, who asked him [the editor] please to submit to the hero of this adventure a little questionnaire destined to throw light on certain points which the story in the Roman paper had left in darkness. Here are the questions, with the replies that were made to them:

1 Was it the first accident on the road that had happened to Monsieur Tonelli, especially lately?

Answer: Yes.

2 Was the spot called Costo di Borgo the only dangerous point on this road? Was it at least the most dangerous of all? On the roads over which Monsieur Tonelli usually passed, returning from the markets, were there other spots as dangerous?

Answer: Along this road there were many spots much more dangerous, as well as on the other roads which Monsieur Tonelli was in the habit of going over.

3 When Madame Maria Tonelli began to be anxious, was the usual hour of her son's return already past? Was it at least past when she decided to go to that spot?

Answer: It was a little past the usual hour.

4 Did the anxiety of the mother and the vision of the accident occur when Monsieur Tonelli had already fallen?

Answer: The anxiety of the mother preceded by several hours the vision of the accident, and the latter occurred three quarters of an hour after the vision, so that the mother had the time to traverse on foot the four kilometers which separated the house of the Tonelli's from the spot called Costo di Borgo.

5 Did Monsieur Tonelli remember having thought of his mother at the time of the accident?

Answer: He states that he thought of her with great affection, as well as of other members of his family, but especially of her.

6 Has any other supernatural experience ever occurred to Madame Tonelli or her son?

Answer: No.

This examination of Professor Francisci's establishes beyond all doubt the authenticity of this case,[17] which greatly resembles the one we related above (page 105). This vision of an accident before it had happened was a vision seen by the spirit of the mother. That which preceded it, the child's vision of his coffin, was a sort of personal presentiment.

I have already recalled (Chapter IV) the presentiment of the astronomer Delaunay, director of the Observatoire in Paris, in an interim (1870 - 72) between the two administrations of Le Verrier, who was drowned in the harbor at Cherbourg, where he had gone almost in spite of himself. And I followed this recollection with that of the sister of Arsene Houssaye, carried off by a groundswell on the coast of Pen-marc'h. Here is a case of the same sort, even more significant and more remarkable for its decisiveness. Baron Joseph Kronlielni, of Podolia, Russia, is responsible for the following account of the death of a high official of the ministry of the Russian Marine, which occurred in the month of June, 1895, as the result of a collision between two boats on the Black Sea:

At the beginning of the year 1895 Madame Lukawski was awakened one night by the groans of her husband, who, in his sleep, uttered the cry: "Help! Save me!" and struggled with the movements of a drowning person. He was dreaming of a terrible catastrophe at sea, and, as soon as he was completely awake, he told how he had been on board of a great ship which sank suddenly after a collision with another ship; and

[17] See Annales des Sciences psychiques, August, 1905

that he had seen himself thrown into the sea and swallowed up by the waves. When he had finished his tale, he said:

"I am convinced, now, that the sea will cause my death." And so strong was his conviction that he began to put his affairs in order, like a man who knows his days are numbered. Two months had passed and the impression caused by the dream had already grown weaker, when an order came for the minister to prepare to leave, with all his subordinates, for a port on the Black Sea.

At the moment of bidding his wife farewell, at the station in Petersburg, Lukawski said to her: "Do you remember my dream!"—"My God! Why do you ask me?" — "Because I am sure that I shall not come back, and that we shall see each other no more." Madame Lukawski forced herself to be calm, but he continued, with deep sadness: "You may say what you wish, my convictions will not change. I know that my end is near and that nothing can prevent it. Yes— yes, I see the harbor again, the ship, the moment of the collision, the panic on board, my end— everything lives again before my eyes." And after a short pause he added: "When the telegram reaches you announcing my death, and you put on mourning, I beg you not to put over your face the long veil which I detest." Quite incapable of replying, Madame Lukawski burst into tears. The whistle of the train gave the signal for departure; Monsieur Lukawski embraced his wife tenderly, and the train disappeared.

After two weeks of extreme anxiety, Madame Lukawski learned from the papers of the collision of the two ships Wladimir and Sineus; it had taken place in the Black Sea. Full of despair, she telegraphed to obtain information from Admiral Zelenoi at Odessa, and received this answer: "No news just at present of your husband, but it is certain that he was on board the Wladimir." The announcement of his death reached her a week later.

It should be added that in his dream Monsieur Lukawski had seen himself struggling with a passenger for his life, an incident that was realized with scrupulous exactitude. In the catastrophe, a passenger on the Wladimir, Monsieur Henicke, had flung himself into the sea with a life-buoy. Monsieur Lukawski, already in the water, started for the buoy as soon as he saw it, and the other cried out to him: "Do not take hold of it; it will not support two persons; we shall be drowned

together." But Lukawski seized hold of it nonetheless, saying that he did not know how to swim. "Then take it," said Henicke. "I am a good swimmer and I shall get along all the same." At this moment a great wave separated them; Monsieur Henicke was able to save himself, but Lukawski went to meet his fate. "Light," 1899, p. 45.

In repeating this tale, Monsieur Bozzano[18] points out that the conjunction of so many circumstances that could not be foreseen, entirely eliminates the hypothesis of chance coincidence, and compares, in this connection, other explanatory theories, reincarnation, fatalism, spirits. We, as a matter of fact, simply wish to convince ourselves of the existence in us of a psychic element endowed with the supra-normal power of seeing the future.

What we wish is to prove that the future virtually exists in the causes that bring it about, and under certain psychological conditions it can really be seen exactly.

We find examples of this vision of the future in all ages; but they have never been interpreted as they deserve to be; no one has ever seen in them the manifestation of the inner powers of the human soul. Here is one, little known, of the famous Captain Montluc, which we can read at the end of Book IV of his "Commentaries." We know that he received the baton of Marshal of France, and no one has forgotten that Henry II was mortally wounded, in 1559, in a tournament, as he was jousting against Montgomery. Here is what Montluc tells of his vision:

The night before the day of the tournament, in my first sleep, I dreamed that I saw the King, seated on the seat, his face all covered with drops of blood, and it seemed to me that it was thus that they paint Christ when the Jews lay the crown of thorns upon him and he holds his hands clasped. I looked at him carefully. The face seemed his, but I could not discover his trouble or see anything but the blood on his face. It seemed to me that I heard some say, "He is dead," and others, "He is not yet dead!" I saw the doctors and surgeons come from and go to his room.

[18] Des Phenomenes premonitoires, p. 77.

And it must be that my dream lasted a long time, for when I awoke I discovered something which I had never believed before, — that a man can weep while he sleeps, — for I found my face all covered with tears and my eyes still shedding them, and I had to let them continue, for I could not keep from weeping for a long time after. My wife thought to comfort me, but I could believe only in his death. Many who are now living know that this is not a mere tale, for I spoke of it as soon as I was awake.

Four days later a messenger arrived at Nerac, who carried a letter to the King of Navarre, from Monsieur the Constable, in which he gave information as to the King's wound and of the small hope for his life.

The most surprising thing about the work which we are undertaking here is that all this should have passed unnoticed for so many centuries, and should have even been disdained, denied, laughed at, and despised.

I have found a curious letter of the year 1615, from Nicolas Pasquier to his brother, the counselor to the king and sheriff of the city of Paris, on the death of their father, Etienne Pasquier, born in 1529, died in 1615, whose death was announced in a premonitory dream exactly a year before, to the day. Here is this document.[19]

I have received your letters this third of September, 1615, on the death of our father, which took place the thirtieth of August, about two hours after midnight. I have something memorable to tell you on this subject. Last year, on the night of the same thirtieth of August, about five o'clock in the morning, I dreamed that I was with our father, who was lying in bed, from which he rose and fell on his knees to pray to God. This he did devoutly, his clasped hands lifted, his eyes raised to heaven. When his prayer was finished, he changed color and fell dead in my arms. I awoke trembling, and told the dream to my wife, and in order to keep it fresh in my memory, as I was already up, I set it down in writing. Consider the two coincidences in this case, the one, that I saw the death of our father one year, to the very day, before his decease, the other

[19] Lenglet-Dufresnoy: Recueil de dissertations (1752), II, ii, p. 1.

that, the very day he died I came across this paper which I had not thought of since. If you analyze this dream you 'will find that everything that took place at the time of his death was foreseen by me; that he would not be ill for long, and he was ill for only ten hours; that he would die a good Christian, as he did; that all his senses would remain sound and healthy up to his last breath. In conclusion, his death was like his life; just as he had enjoyed great peace for eighty-six years, two months and twenty-three days, so his death was peaceful, without sorrow, difficulty or pain.

Yes, all of these psychic facts have been known for centuries. The Latin authors have told us that the assassination of Julius Caesar had been announced to him that morning by his wife Calpurnia; that Brutus foresaw his defeat in the Battle of Philippi which was foretold by his "genius"; that Arterius Rufus had seen in a dream the net-fighter who was to stab him,[20] etc. But all this has remained misunderstood.

And the premonition of the tragic death of Henry IV, reported by his confidant Sully? And so many others!

Astronomy has had its Copernicus, its Kepler, its Newton. The psychic sciences have not yet had their Hipparchus, their Ptolemy, their Anistarchus; they await their Copernicus.

We have only to read a little to find everywhere these observations that we are just now beginning to take seriously.

One of the profoundest and most original scholars of the seventeenth century, Pierre Gassendi, the friend of Galileo and of Pereisch, has told of the following premonitory dream:

Monsieur Pereisch set out one day on a trip to Nimes with a friend, a certain Monsieur Rainier. The latter, noticing in the night that Pereisch was talking in his sleep, awoke him and asked him what was the matter with him. He answered: "I dreamed that we had reached Nimes, and that one of the jewelers offered me a medal of Julius Caesar for four

[20] See Valerius Maximus: De Somnis Romanorum

ecus. Just as I was about to give him the money you awoke me, to my great regret."

When they had reached Nimes, and as they were walking about the town, Monsieur Pereisch recognized the jeweler's shop that he had seen in his dream. He entered and asked if he had nothing curious to sell him and received the answer: "Yes, a medal of Julius Caesar." When asked how much it was worth, the merchant answered, "Four ecus." Monsieur Pereisch hastened to pay him and was delighted to see his dream happily realized.

Here the fulfillment of the premonition seems to have been determined by the memory of the premonition itself, for Pereisch recognized the jeweler's shop which he had seen in his dream.

Dr. E. Osty, who was especially versed in this subject of lucidity, held a conference, duly recorded at the general Institute of Psychology, on March 24, 1919. I will select from this the following case that had occurred to him personally.[21] He reports:

In 1919 a lucid subject that I was using for the first time described my life in this way:

"You are living in a little town in the center of France—I see the house where you live, on a small square—but your work is not there. You go for your work to a house where you have a desk— there you handle a great many sheets of paper. How many sheets of paper you touch! They bring them to you from another office room, next to yours, where several men are writing. There is a perpetual going and coming between the room in which they are and your own. You look at the papers they bring you and give them back to them. People also come from outside bringing you papers. You look at them, you write and you give them back. How many papers you touch! — how many sheets of paper!"

[21] Bullitin de l'Institute general psychologique, January-June, 1919

All this was false. My existence at the time was composed of little else than the practice of medicine, and personal work in psychology. All this came true after August, 1914, when I became head doctor of the hospital and of the post at Vierzon. During the first two years of the war, the fragmentary vision of the medium became one aspect—I should even say the principal and most characteristic aspect — of my daily life. I was immersed in administrative red tape.

This vision of the future was exact, like a window opened on a future scene. It is quite remarkable that these personal visions are so frequent, while general events and especially the frightful political catastrophe of the German war of 1914-18, are not the subject of any characteristic foresight of this kind. It would seem that the vision concerned only the sensations passing from soul to soul.

My laborious and much regretted friend, Dr. Moutin, who made remarkable experiments in hypnotism at my house, in 1889, of which I shall have occasion to speak later, was occupied in 1903 with analytical studies in spiritualism, among which is worth noting the singular example given here:

During a séance, held on August 19th, of which be kept the written account, following his excellent habit, a spirit manifested itself at the table, saying that it was a lady, Hermance V—, who had recently died. The doctor had known this lady and her husband for a long time. The following statement astonished him very much:

"My husband will remarry next September. Before he marries he will come to Paris, but will not have time to make you a visit."

"What you tell me is impossible. I know V— and I know all the affection he had for his wife; I could never believe that he would remarry four months after her death."

"It is true, nevertheless, and in a few days you will receive the confirmation of what I say."

"Then it is interest which guides him and not affection?"

“Interest has nothing to do with it; you know well that Lucien [this was the first name of V—] cannot live alone.”

“Will he marry a woman of his own age?”

“No, a young girl, twenty-three years of age, and shortly after his marriage he will leave Provence and come to Paris.”

“How is that possible, with the position which he occupies in the Midi? It is quite inadmissible.”

“Unfortunate circumstances, especially a large loss of money, forced him to come to Paris, to seek a new situation.”

“We shall see if your prediction is realized; I doubt it very much. But, admitting that what you say is true, do you see this union with. displeasure?”

“On the contrary, since Lucien cannot live alone.”

At these last words the table remained quiet. After a few minutes of waiting I asked if the communication were ended: “Yes,” was the answer.

Madame V— did not appear again, and that was the only manifestation that she gave.

In the present case nothing could have made any one expect these revelations, nothing could make us take this communication seriously.

The members of my family and I were the only ones who knew the dead woman, and we were far from believing what she had just told us; the other persons who were present at our meetings had never even heard the name of V—.

A few days later, on August 27th I received a letter from my friend V— in which he announced his approaching marriage, in September, to Mademoiselle X— and told me some things about his future which exactly coincided with what we had already been told on August 19th.

In March, 1904, Monsieur V— came to see us and told us that he had come to live in Paris; I told him of Hermance’s communication, and he was so astonished that although he did not doubt our statements, he

wished to see the written account of this séance, and he was able to ascertain that everything his first wife had said had been literally correct—his trip to Paris before his second marriage, his change of position. He was petrified with astonishment, and affirmed the reality of the concluding facts that we do not hesitate to give as proof of the preservation of personality after death, and as a patent proof of the identity of Madame Hermance V—.

Dr. Moutin presents this event as the most important of those that brought about his spiritualistic convictions. Does it really possess the positive value that he attributed to it!

It has been demonstrated that our thoughts can take effect either consciously or unconsciously, to adduce these typical statements of fact. Dr. Moutin and his family knew Madame Hermance V. The idea that her husband, who had become a widower, might marry again was not in the least extraordinary. On the other hand, the thoughts of the widower may have had something to do with the event, as he already had the intention of remarrying and he announced it to his friends eight days after this séance. Did not the plan of leaving the country for Paris already occupy his mind?

It seems to me that the identity of the dead woman is far from certain and that the manifestation may well have been due to other psychic causes. Nevertheless, it seems to me probable. This is not the place to discuss this important problem, and. I only mention the case as an example of the exact announcement of a future event.

I will add, however, that in this particular case, as in similar ones, the first wife of the friend of Dr. Moutin may have had, even in her lifetime, an intuition of this second marriage and may have approved of it, which would be in favor of her identity. We shall return to this subject in the third part of this work, when we discuss the manifestations of the dead.

The famous cure of Ars, the Abbe Vianney (1786-1859), has given several examples of his power of seeing the future. Here is one of them that I take from his biography:[22]

Sister Marie-Victoire, the founder of a rescue home for young girls, was at Ars, at the beginning of her work, with two companions, one of which is at present her assistant. One morning before their departure, when they all three prepared to hear the mass of Monsieur Vianney, he approached them, and addressing Sister Marie-Victoire, who had not then taken her vows, he said to her: "You must leave quickly."—"But Monsieur le cure," she answered, taken by surprise, "we wished first to hear the holy mass."—"No, my daughter, leave instantly, for one of you is going to fall ill. If you delay you will be obliged to remain here, you will not be able to go away." In fact, a short distance from the district where they lived, one of the travelers—she who has since become Sister Marie-Frangoise—began to feel so ill that her two companions were forced to carry her in their arms as far as her home. This was the beginning of an illness that nothing had presaged.

The Abbe Vianney was gifted with excellent psychic faculties. He attributed to the devil certain manifestations of an inferior order, such as unexplained noises; but nothing has been less clearly demonstrated than the existence of the devil.

This premonition was of service. The greater part of the time they are of no use at all and prevent nothing. Here is one, however, which saved the life of a child.

The English Society for Psychical Research has reported, among others, a case of a very precise vision of the future, which saved the life of a little girl who was going to play near the railroad in Edinburgh, where an accident due to a locomotive killed three men and would have crushed the child. The mother writes the following account of this curious escape:

[22] Le Cure d'Ars, by the Abbe Alfred Monnin, II, 500.

I had told my daughter that I would let her go out to walk from three until four o'clock; and as she was alone I advised her to go into the "railway garden" (a name which we had given to a narrow strip of land between the sea and the railway). A few minutes after she had left I distinctly heard an inner voice saying to me, "Send for her at once, or something frightful will happen to her."

I thought it was a matter of autosuggestion, and I wondered what could possibly happen to her on such a fine day, so I did not send for her.

Nevertheless, a few moments later, the same voice began to say the same words to me, but more imperiously. I still resisted, and I used all my imagination to divine what could happen to the child.

I thought of an encounter with a mad dog, but the thing was so improbable that it would have been absurd to recall her for such a silly fancy; and although I was beginning to feel anxious I resolved to do nothing about it, and tried to think of other things. I succeeded for several minutes, but soon the voice renewed its intimation with the same words, "Send after her immediately, or something frightful will happen to her." At the same time I was seized with violent trembling, and with an impression of extreme terror. I got up quickly, rang the bell, and told the servant to go at once after my daughter, repeating mechanically the words of the intimation, "otherwise something frightful will happen to her."

At the end of a quarter of an hour, the servant returned with the child, who, disappointed at being recalled so soon, asked if I really intended to keep her in the house all the afternoon. "No," I answered, "and if you will promise me not to go again into the 'railway garden' you may go where you wish—to your uncle's, for example— or you may play in the garden with your little cousins." I thought that within those four walls she would be safe, for although the child had come back safe and sound, I felt clearly that the danger still existed in the spot where she had been before, and I wished to prevent her from returning there.

Well, it was precisely at that point that the locomotive and the tender ran off the tracks, breaking the walls and crashing against the very rocks on which the child was accustomed to go and sit.

This extraordinary escape has been attested to by all the family and the neighbors. It occurred in the month of July, 1860, and was published in the “Journal of the Society for Psychical Research” (Volume VIII, March, 1897) and by me in “La Revue” for May, 1912. Its veracity cannot be attacked.

I will add here, with Bozzano, a no less remarkable premonition which saved the lives of a whole family, and which was also caused by a mysterious voice. It, too, is taken from the “Journal of the Society for Psychical Research” (Volume I, page 283). Captain MacGowan himself reported the event to Professor Barrett:

In January, 1877, when I chanced to be in Brooklyn with my two young sons, who were on their vacation, I promised to take them to the theater on a certain evening. The day before I had already picked out and paid for the three seats.

On the morning of the appointed day I began to notice an inner voice which repeated insistently: “Don’t go to the theater; take your sons back to school.” Despite my efforts to distract myself, I could not prevent this voice from continuing, and repeating the same words in a more imperious tone than ever; and to such an extent that by noon I had decided to inform my friends and children that we could not go to the theater. But my friends reproached me for this determination, pointing out that it was cruel to deprive the children of a pleasure that was so unusual for them, and so impatiently awaited, after having made them a promise, and that caused me to change my mind again.

However, during the whole afternoon, this inner voice did not cease from repeating the order, with an insistence so impressive, that when evening had come, and one hour before the beginning of the play, I peremptorily told my sons that instead of going to the theater we were going to New York, and we left.

Well, it happened that that very evening the theater was entirely destroyed by fire, and that 305 persons perished in the flames.

If we had been at the theater, my sister, who was there, would have perished as well as we, for we should have gone out by a staircase on which every one was crushed to death.

I have never in my life had another presentiment, and I have not the habit of changing my mind without good reasons, and on this occasion I did it with the greatest reluctance, quite in spite of myself.

What was the cause which obliged me, against my will, not to go to the theater, after having paid for the three tickets and arranged everything for passing the evening pleasantly?

Captain MacGowan explained to Professor Barrett that the inner voice[23] had sounded very clearly to him, "as if some one had really been speaking from the inside of the body," and, that it had persisted from breakfast-time up to the moment when he took his children to New York. His sister still preserves the three tickets that he had bought the day before.[24]

These events are so convincing, so thoroughly demonstrated, that they strongly confirm one another and together from a mass of evidence that no force would be able to destroy.

It seems superfluous to add other examples to the preceding ones. However, there are some so typical that it would be a pity not to recall them, to anchor fast the idea of truth in the minds of the most stubborn. The following observation, which is so carefully reported by the very exact experimenter Liebault,[25] in his "Therapeutiques Suggestives," is especially remarkable.

The learned doctor of Nancy tells how on January 7, 1886, at four o'clock in the afternoon (according to his authentic daily memorandum book)

[23] What was this voice? We have heard of others in the preceding cases, that of the lady from Edinburgh a few minutes ago, then the telephonic voice of the Swedish pastor, that of Monsieur Dufilhol, the inner voice announcing the election of Casimir-Perier, Monsieur Fryer hearing his brother sixty-four kilometers away, the telepathic sound heard by Dr. Balme, that of Dr. Nicholas at Zante, the voice of a father to his son, one hundred kilometers away, a mother hearing her son from England to Java, weeping heard twenty-four hours in advance, the voices of Jeanne d'Arc, the young girl in the bath, the phantom of Monsieur Marechal; voices evidently fictitious but of psychic origin.
[24] See Bozzano, Des Phenomenes premonitoires, p. 408
[25] See L'Inconnu, p. 564

one of his clients, Monsieur de Ch— came, in a state of nervousness easily understood, to consult him. Let us hear the story:

Six years before, on the twenty-sixth of December, 1879, as he was walking in a street in Paris, this young man had seen, written over a door: "Mine. Lenormand, Necromancer," and, pricked by curiosity, had gone in.

On examining his hand the prophetess had told him: "You will lose your father in a year, to the day. You will soon be a soldier (he was then nineteen) but you will not remain one very long. You will marry young and have two children. You will die at twenty-six."

This amazing prophecy, which Monsieur de Ch— confided to his friends and to some of his family, he did not at first take seriously; but when his father died on the twenty-seventh of December, 1880, after a short illness, just a year after the interview with the fortune-teller, this misfortune rather shook his incredulity; when he became a soldier for only seven months; when, having been married shortly after, he became the father of two children, and was on the point of becoming twenty-six, definitely shaken by fear, he believed that there only remained a few days of life for him. It was then that he came to consult Dr. Liebault, and to ask him if it would not be possible to conjure fate. For, he thought, as the four first events of the prophecy had come to pass, the fifth must inevitably be realized! The doctor writes:

That very day and on the following days, I tried to put M. de Ch— into a deep sleep, so as to dissipate the black impression engraved on his mind—that of his approaching death, which he imagined would take place on the fourth of February, the anniversary of his birthday, although the prophetess had not been definite on this point. I could not produce even the lightest sleep, so greatly agitated was he. However, as it was urgently necessary to take away his conviction, for we have seen predictions fulfilled to the letter by autosuggestion, I proposed to him to consult one of my somnambulists, an old man called the Prophet, because he had announced the precise moment of his own recovery from a four-year-long attack of rheumatism and even the time of his daughter's recovery.

Monsieur de Ch— accepted my proposal with eagerness, and did not fail to appear promptly at the rendezvous. As soon as he was in rapport with this somnambulist, his first words were: "When shall I die!" The experienced sleeper, suspecting the young man's trouble, answered, after having made him wait: "You will die— you will die—in forty-one years." The effect of these words was marvelous. Immediately the patient became gay, expansive, full of hope; and when he had passed the fourth of February, the day so greatly feared by him, he believed himself saved.

I thought no more of all this when, at the beginning of October, I received a letter announcing that my unfortunate client had passed away on the thirtieth of September, 1886, in his twenty-seventh year, that is to say, when he was twenty-six, as Madame Lenormand had foretold. And in order that it may not be supposed that there is any error on my part, I preserve this letter, as well as my register: they are two written and undeniable pieces of evidence.

Such is the account of Dr. Liebault, whose works are well known. Analyze, dissect this series of incidents with all imaginable skepticism, with the greatest surgical decisiveness, and even if you should think that there was nothing surprising that the fortune-teller should have predicted to this young man nineteen years old that he would be a soldier and would marry, still four coincidences would have to be explained: first, the death of his father at the end, of exactly one year; secondly, his release from military service before the usual time; third, the birth of two children; fourth, his own death at twenty-six years. It seems to me that this tale alone would almost suffice to establish our contention. It would perhaps show us also that it is imprudent to ask these questions, even when one does not believe in them, because one's peace of mind suffers inevitably, and it is not necessary to arouse anxiety.

But is one always the master! We must confess that the whole of this study of the conditions of death bristles with interrogation points. The following case also is most odd.

How can it also be explained?

On the night of May 24-25, 1900, Monsieur Renou, who at the time was twenty-eight years old, and living in a large city in the north of France, dreamed that when he was at his barber's the latter's wife told his fortune by cards. Let us mention in passing that the person in question had never shown proof of this social talent. She then said to him: "Your father will die on the second of June."

On the second of May, in the morning, Monsieur Renou told this dream to his family. At the time he was living with his parents, and all these good people, who were most skeptical about this sort of warning, laughed at it without attaching any importance to it.

Monsieur Renou, the father, had had, at long intervals, a few attacks of asthma; but at this moment he was very well. On the first of June, while he was present at the funeral of a person of his acquaintance, he told the dream to one of his friends, and concluded gaily: "If I must die tomorrow, I haven't much time to lose."

The entire day passed without his feeling indisposed.

In the evening, one of his sons, a soldier at Verdun, came home on furlough. The whole reunited family talked joyously, well on into the evening.

At half-past eleven, Monsieur Renou, the father, went to bed, not in the least indisposed. At midnight he was suddenly seized with an attack of breathlessness: intense dyspnoea, a violent cough, a mossy and bloody expectoration. They ran for a doctor: it was too late, all was over. At twenty minutes past midnight—therefore, on the second day of June-he died.

This tale, in which only the name is changed, at the request of the family, was published in "Les Nouveaux Horizons de la science" (Douai, June, 1905). Dr. Samas, who reported this event, searched for the explanation. Skeptics will make an easy matter of it, he says, by objecting that there was nothing but mere coincidence: Monsieur Renou, already affected with heart trouble, consequently impressed by this dream; the return of

his son, — the second cause for emotion; his already over-excited imagination determined, by reflex action, the ultimate crisis. But we have just seen that neither he nor any other member of his family attached the least importance to this strange dream. Then —?

Let us consider, also, the following premonitory dream of death, which was associated with an apparition.

On March 8, 1913, I received this important account from Madame Suzanne Bonnefoy, president of the union of French Women, of the French Red Cross, at Cherbourg, the wife of the head doctor of the Maritime Hospital:

I feel, dear Master, that I must tell you a case of personal premonition, which may be of use if added to the list of your psychic documents.

On the eighteenth of last January, at about eight o'clock in the morning, the servant of Monsieur Feron, an attorney, living in rue Christine, and first deputy of the town of Cherbourg, came to tell me of the sudden death of his master, which had occurred ten hours before.. The affection that I bore Monsieur Feron was rather that of a sister than of a friend. Very much moved, I ran to offer my services to his wife Madame Feron, who, having been married for twenty-eight years to a husband who constantly petted her, was in despair and wished to die. "And to think," she cried on seeing me, "that for a month he has repeated constantly that he would never see the end of January. Just lately, he had been to the burial of one of his friends, and had had, on the following night, a very strange dream, in which this friend had appeared and had said to him: 'On such a day you will come and join me."'

As Madame Feron finished this tale, broken with sobs, Madame Leflambe, who lives here, on the Place Napoleon, entered. Madame Feron repeated her tale, and added:

"My husband, in consequence of a dream, predicted not only the death of his mother but also of your husband, Madame. When you were leaving for Vichy, in 1911, where Monsieur Leflambe had insisted that you should go for your health, he said to me: 'Our friend, Monsieur Leflambe, is going to Vichy for his wife's health, but he will not return.'

Monsieur Leflambe, who was very well when he left, contracted there a fatal case of pneumonia.

"On coming down from this visit, of which I am telling you very simply, I met the servant: 'Monsieur Feron,' I said to him, 'was at the Town-hall only last evening, very well and not knowing he was to die so soon!'— 'Oh, Madame,' he answered, 'on the contrary, Monsieur Feron told us that he had dreamed that he would never see the end of January, and he seemed very much struck by it. '"

Monsieur Feron was taken suddenly ill in the street and died in half an hour, carried off by a heart attack. Very much respected at Cherhourg, he enjoyed a comfortable fortune, excellent health, and everything in life smiled upon him.

Yesterday, the fifth of March, I was talking once more with Madame Feron, of this singular premonition. She told me that he felt sure he had already lived another life than this.

Suzanne Bonnefoy, 13 rue de la Polle, Cherbourg.

(Letter 2325.)

When I chanced to be in Cherbourg, in September, 1914, Monsieur and, Madame Bonnefoy confirmed to me this most curious case, and I had, moreover, an independent and spontaneous confirmation from Monsieur Biard, director of the "Revel de la Manche," who had been struck by the sudden death of the mayor's deputy, and who knew the circumstances. These facts exist; it serves no purpose to deny them. They ought, on the contrary, to instruct us.

Here is another of the same order:

Monsieur Harley, a merchant at Pont-Audemer (Eure) wrote to me on the thirteenth of April, 1918 (Letter 4024), that Dr. Castara had one night seen a man push aside the curtains of his bed and announce to him: first, a good situation, and, secondly, his death at the age of forty years; that on the date fixed he had gathered all his friends together at a great dinner, at which his grandfather and grandmother were present, congratulating himself on the end of the nightmare, and that at

midnight, he had been seized with a raging toothache and had fallen dead.

The well-known naturalist, Edwin Reed, director of the Museum of Natural History of the city of Conception, Chile, enjoyed excellent health a little while before his death. Two months before his decease, he dreamed that on reaching the end of an avenue where he was walking, he saw a tomb with a cross and read on it the following inscription: “Reed, naturalist, November 7, 1910.” Mr. Reed jokingly related this strange dream on different occasions to several friends. A short time after, Madame de R—, the daughter-in-law of Mr. Reed, who was living at Mendoza, dreamed one night, as she was about to celebrate the anniversary of her marriage, which fell on that very day, the seventh of November, that all the presents which reached her on that day were funeral wreaths.

Well, Mr. Reed died November 7, 1910.

During the days which preceded his death he recalled that date to those about him, without seeming to attach the least importance to it.[26]

I could cite a great number of events similar to the preceding ones, proving that the future can be seen. That is not the aim of this book, and I have consecrated a special book to them that will be published shortly. The examples which we have before us are more than sufficient for this chapter, which was simply but expressly destined, as were the former ones, to point out the existence of faculties of the soul independent of the exercise of the material senses. To add more evidence here could give no better proof of these faculties.

It seems to me that the attentive reader of these pages can no longer doubt the existence of the soul and its purely psychic faculties.

Before the knowledge of telepathy, in the past ages, they attributed these sorts of warnings to angels or demons, or, fifty years ago, to disembodied spirits. Today we can think that there is telepathic transmission from brain to brain, that cerebral waves overcome distances. This is possible; but it is also possible that the science of the future will smile at our present theories as we smile at those of the ancients. Whatever may be

[26] Revista de Estudios Psiques (Valparaiso). Annales des Sciences psychiques, April, 1911.

the explanation, premonitory dreams, visions of the future, in various ways, are authentic, investigations have confirmed them, and that is what concerns us here.

We might, in this account of the statements relating to a vision of the future, have spoken of the premonitions, the previsions, the predictions calculated by astrology, however inexplicable they also may be. That our destiny can be read in the stars seems inadmissible and absolutely illogical to our understanding, since the geocentric and anthropocentric appearances have been demonstrated by modern astronomy to be false. However, there are singular examples of the realization of these predictions. We lack space to give them here, but I shall cite briefly a few of incontestable authenticity, which we owe to men of the highest standing, celebrated, astronomers.

David Fabricius, a Protestant pastor (born at Essen in 1564; died at Resterhaft in 1617), the astronomer to whom we owe the discovery of Mira Ceti, “the Marvelous,” a variable star of the Whale, had intercourse, through his studies, with Tycho Brahe and Kepler, and, like them, was occupied with astrology, which, by the way, he believed in. He himself calculated, from the constellations, that the seventh day of May would be fatal to him. On that day he had taken every possible precaution to prevent any sort of accident. Finally, at ten o ‘clock in the evening, after very absorbing work, he thought he might take the air for a moment in the court of his parsonage. But scarcely had he arrived there when a peasant named Jean Hoyer, who thought he had been designated as a thief in a sermon by Fabricius, came out from the spot where he was hiding and with a blow of his pitchfork broke the skull of the unfortunate pastor, who died that very night.

We read of his friend Tycho Brahe, that he also read in the stars that a certain day would be disastrous to him. In vain he surrounded himself with every precaution: lie was attacked in the darkness by a personal enemy called Mauderup Parsberg, who cut off part of his nose, which obliged the illustrious astronomer to wear a silver nose. And in fact, we always see m his portraits his nose marked by an oblique cut.

Jean Stoeffler, born in 1472, died in 1530, greatly devoted to astrological calculations, found them true, at least for himself. The examination of his horoscope had given him the conviction that he would die on a

certain day from the blow of a heavy object that would fall on his head. He did not go out on that day, received a few friends, and thought he had finished the day without mishap, when, wishing to reach a certain book that was placed on an insecure shelf, he received the board and all its books on his head, and did indeed die in consequence of the blow.

These three examples suffice to represent here very numerous coincidences that could not be due to chance. The stars themselves count for no more in these interpretations than do the cards in the hands of the fortune-tellers. When Fabricius, Tycho Brahe, Stoeffler made these predictions, they were led by a secret, supra-normal power of intuition.

The same thing was true of the niece of Prince Radziwill, as is reported by the translator of the Souvenirs of the Marquise de Crequi (1834):

Prince Radziwill had adopted one of his nieces, an orphan. He lived in a castle in Galicia, and this castle had a very large room which separated the apartments of the prince from those of the children; so that in order to communicate with them, one had to cross this room, or pass through the court.

The young Agnes, who at the time was five or six years old, always uttered piercing cries whenever she was made to cross the large room. She pointed out, with an expression of terror, an enormous picture hung over the door, which represented the Cumaean Sybil. They tried for a long time to overcome this repugnance, which they attributed to some childish obstinacy; but since serious accidents resulted from the use of force they finally no longer allowed her to enter the room, and for ten or twelve years the young girl preferred to cross the vast courtyard or the gardens, even in snow and cold, rather than pass through that doorway which made so disagreeable an impression on her.

The time had come to marry the young countess, and when she was engaged there was one day a great reception at the castle. The company wished, in the evening, to play some lively game, and they went into the big hall, where, as a matter of fact, the wedding ball was to take place.

Excited by the young people about her, Agnes did not hesitate to follow her guests; but hardly had she crossed the threshold of the door when she confessed her terror and wished to draw back. They had made her go in first, according to custom, and her fiance, her friends, her uncle, laughing at her childishness, shut the door upon her. The poor young girl wished to resist, and while shaking one of the doors, she caused the picture above to fall. This enormous mass broke her skull with one of its corners, and killed her on the spot.[27]

I shall cease giving these examples, as this book must have an end, apologizing for having multiplied them a little too eagerly; and as my readers are by now certainly convinced.

Conclusion: The future can be seen.

In the present state of human knowledge it would be useless to try to explain how this vision rises in our minds, as well as the sensations that are related to it.

We may think that the subconscious, the psychic being, in the exercise of its supra-normal faculties, such as certain forms of clairvoyance, and, notably, prescience, crosses the limits of time and space, that is to say, the laws that regulate our material world. It is for this reason that future events seem to it to be on the same plane as the present and the past. It draws its power from laws that are still unknown. And this fact, however inexplicable it may be, has nothing inadmissible about it, if this psychic being or organism constitutes the total and permanent personality of the human being, a personality nourished by the most diverse and mysterious sources. In this order of ideas there would therefore be no temerity in supposing that, under certain conditions favored by sleep, hypnoses, or such and such personal predispositions, the influences that have come from the invisible world could invade the subconscious and inspire it with knowledge of which it makes proof by the discovery of past, present, or, above all, future events. During life, as well as after death, the soul is immersed in the ethereal atmosphere of the invisible world.

[27] Charpignon Physiologie et metaphysique du Magnetisme, p. 352

The rigorous examination of facts, the closest logic, lead us to conclude that it is impossible to attribute to matter, to the brain, to the cerebral molecules, to any chemical or mechanical combinations whatever, the intellectual power of seeing without the eyes, of foreseeing future events, of knowing what is passing at a distance, or what will happen in the future, facts outside the corporeal organism and the essentially mental organism. These observations prove the existence of the spirit, endowed with intrinsic faculties, independent of the physical senses.

During the earthly existence, the soul is associated with a brain appropriate to its functions. Mens sana in corpore sano.

If the soul is not a production of the brain, if it is distinct from the cerebro-spinal nervous system, if it exists in itself, there is no reason why it should disintegrate with it.

Certain phenomena, such as the reading of unknown texts, testify to the existence of a spirit endowed with special faculties. This spirit may be our own, and it has not been proved that there has been the intervention of spirits foreign to those of the experimenters. Nevertheless, the hypothesis remains. For if the spirit survives death, it still exists somewhere, and if our spirit can discover hidden things during its lifetime, why should it lose this power after death!

For the very reason that we attribute the production of these phenomena to the action of our spirit, we ought to accept also the possibility of its ulterior action, and compare the two hypotheses, in order to estimate which is the simpler.

But the fact that these readings, these divinations, these previsions, these psychic actions, these spiritualistic communications, are realized without our expecting them, in complete unconsciousness on our part, places before us a complication as great as the hypothesis of spirits external to our own.

It seems quite likely that the two elements are brought into action—our own metaphysical faculties and at times the action of invisible spirits. Let us not be exclusive.

We go forward in complete mystery, and this mystery is imposed upon our thirst for knowledge.

To admit only the facts that can be explained in the present state of knowledge is a great error. Not to be able to explain an observation proves nothing against its authenticity. Scholars ought always to have before their minds the following remarks of Arago, concerning the history of aerolites:

The Chinese believed that the appearance of aerolites was closely connected with contemporary events, and it was for this reason that they made lists of them. I do not know, as a matter of fact, whether we have much right to laugh at this supposition. Were the scholars of Europe any wiser when, refusing to believe the evidence of the events, they stated that it was impossible for stones to fall from the atmosphere? Did not the Academy of Sciences declare in 1769 that the stone picked up at the moment of its fall, near Luce, by several persons who had followed it with their eyes until it reached the ground, had not fallen from the skies? Finally, was not the formal written account of the municipality of Julliac, stating that on July 24, 1790, there fell in the fields, on the roofs of the houses, in the streets of the village a great quantity of stones, treated, in the journals of the period, as a ridiculous tale, fit to arouse the pity not only of scholars but of all reasonable people?

The physicists who will admit only those facts for which they perceive an explanation, certainly hinder more the advance of science than the men who can be reproached for too great credulity.

How many times have I repeated that it is a total mistake to believe that a fact that cannot be explained ought not to be admitted? To understand or not to understand a phenomenon proves nothing against its existence. So said Cicero long ago.[28]

[28] "Cur fiat quidque, quoerisRecte omnino; sed non nunc id agitur: fiat, necne fiat, id quoeritur. Ut si magnetem lapidem esse dicam, qui ferrum ad se alliciat et attrahat; rationem, cur id fiat, affere nequeam: fieri omnino neges? [You wish to have the explanation of these things? Very well; but that is not the question: are they real, yes or no? That is what we wish to know. What! I might tell you that the magnet is a body that attracts iron and attaches itself to it; but because I could not give you the explanation of it, would you deny it?]" (De Divinatione, lib I, cap. 39.)

An incomprehensible fact is still a fact, but an incomprehensible explanation is not an explanation. The mental faculties that we have just watched in operation, prove that there is in the human being a psychic element distinct from the physical organism, seeing across time and space, penetrating the invisible world, and to which the future as well as the past can appear as present.

We are studying here the world of the soul that it is no longer permissible to misunderstand.

To solve the mystery of death, to establish the survival of the soul, we first had to prove that the soul does exist, individually, an existence proved by special, extra-corporeal faculties, which cannot be included among the properties of the material brain, or among chemical or mechanical reactions; faculties essentially spiritual, such as the will, acting without the spoken word; autosuggestion, producing physical effects; presentiments; telepathy; intellectual transmissions; reading in a closed book; the sight by the spirit of a far-off country, of a future scene or event— all phenomena outside the sphere of our physical organism, lacking any common measure with our organic sensations and proving that the soul is a substance which exists in itself.

I hope that this proof has been rigorously made.

Psychic observations prove that the universe is not limited to things that can be reached by the five or six senses derived from our animal inheritance. There are other orders of creation.

Since the personal existence of our spiritual entity has been thus established, we shall now study, with the same experimental method, the phenomena associated with death itself, the manifestations of the dying, the apparitions of the living and the dead, the constitution of the psychic being, haunted houses, communications from the dead, the proofs of the survival of the psychic atom, the ethereal body. What has preceded belongs to life.

We are coming now to what concerns death, and to what goes on after the last corporeal hour. This new spiritual synthesis is thus composed of three parts that succeed one another logically: Before Death) At the Moment of Death, and After Death.

I Before Death: Proofs of the existence of the soul.

II At the Moment of Death: The manifestations and apparitions of the dying; doubles; phenomena of occultism.

III After Death: The manifestations and apparitions of the dead; the soul after death.

The second and third parts are already completed, as well as this, and will be published consecutively.

The sole aim of this work, the sole ambition of the author, is that the whole may bring, so far as is possible, in the present state of positive science, the satisfaction longed for in so many legitimate aspirations toward the understanding of the truth.

This first volume of a very complex work proves the existence of the human soul independently of the bodily organism. In this, it seems to me, we have acquired a fact of the very highest importance for the whole doctrine of philosophy.