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A MODERN VIEW OF GHOSTS.

BY ALICE BODINGTON.

[CONCLUDED.]

The extraordinary case mentioned by General Barter C. B. seems to come under Mr. Myers's denomination of "a dead man's dream." General Barter was in 1854 a subaltern in the 75th Regiment quartered at the hill station of Murree in the Punjab. He rented a house belonging to a Lieutenant B. who had died the previous year at Peshawur. Gen. Barter had just said good night to some friends who had paid him a visit, and whom he had accompanied some distance towards their own home, and he had turned to go back to his house. He had two dogs with him, which were hunting about in the brushwood. It was a lonely night and the moon at the full. Suddenly he heard "the ring of a horse's hoof as the shoe struck the stones coming along the bridle path—just before it takes a sharp bend—and—in a few seconds round the corner appeared a man mounted on a pony with two syces or grooms. At this time the two dogs came and crouching at my side, gave low frightened whimpers. The moon was at the full, so bright that you could see to read a newspaper by its light, and I saw the party before me advance as plainly as if it were noonday; they were above me some eight or ten feet on the bridle road. On the party came till almost in front of me; and now I had better describe them. The rider was in full dinner dress, with white waistcoat and wearing a tall chimney-pot hat, and he sat on a powerful hill pony [dark brown, with black mane and tail] in a listless sort of way, the reins hanging loosely from both hands. A syce led the pony at each side, but their faces I could not see, the one next to me having his back to me, and the one furthest off being hidden by the pony's head; each held the bridle close up by the bit, the man next me with his right, the other with his left hand, and the other hands were on the thighs of the rider as if to steady him in his seat. As they approached, "I, knowing they could not get to any other place but my own, called out in Hindustani 'Quon hai?' (who is it?) There was no answer, and on they came till right in front of me, when I said in English,

"Hallo, what the d—l do you want here?' Instantly the group came to a halt, the rider gathering up the bridle reins with both hands, turned his face which had hitherto been looking away from me, towards me and looked down upon me. The group was still as in a tableau, and I recognised the rider as Lieut. B. whom I had formerly known. *The face was different from what I had known it; in place of being clean shaved it was surrounded by a fringe (what used to be known as a Newgate fringe) and it was the face of a dead man; the ghastly waxen pallor of it brought out more distinctly in the moonlight by the fringe of dark hair by which it was encircled; the body too was far stouter than I had known it in life.*

"I marked all this in a moment, and then resolved to lay hold of the thing whatever it was. I dashed up the bank, and the earth giving under my feet, I fell forward on my hands. Recovering myself instantly I gained the road, and stood in the exact spot where the group had been, but which was now vacant. The road stopped at a precipice twenty yards beyond; it was impossible for them to go on; impossible for them to have turned back in a second.

"Next morning I went up to Lieutenant Deane who belonged to the same regiment as B.; and gradually induced him to talk of him. I said, 'How very stout he had become lately, and what possessed him to allow his beard to grow into that horrid fringe!' D. replied, 'Yes, he became very bloated before his death; you know he led a very fast life, and while on the sick list he allowed his beard to grow in spite of all we could say to him, and I believe he was buried with it.' I then asked where he had got the pony I had seen, describing it minutely. 'Why,' said D., 'how do you know anything about all this? You had not seen B. for two or three years, and the pony you never saw. He bought him at Peshawur, and killed him one day riding in his reckless fashion down the hill to Trete.' I then told him, what I had seen the night before."

General Barter adds that though he knew B. had built the house, the fact had not interested him; he had never talked about B. nor thought about him.

He says that during the six weeks they spent in this house his wife and himself repeatedly heard the sound of a man riding rapidly down the path to the house. He doubts whether anyone but B. who was a reckless rider had ever ridden down that path. "Once," he says, "when the galloping sound was very distinct, I rushed to the door of the house. There I found my Hindoo bearer, standing with a tattie in his hand. I asked him what he was there for. He said there came a sound of riding down the hill, and 'passed him like a typhoon' and went round the corner of the house, and he was determined to waylay it whatever it was. He added '*Thitan ka ghar hai*' (It is 'a devil's house')." Mrs. Barter corroborates the hearing of the sounds of violent riding. In this case if we accept General Barter's evidence, the incidents connected with his reckless riding at Murree seem to have so strongly impressed the miserable B. that even after death the impression was sufficiently strong to be conveyed (as an apparently objective vision) to another person. Moreover if we attach weight to the corroborative evidence, the mind (if I may be forgiven the expression) of the deceased seems to have dwelt permanently on those incidents in his life at Murree which culminated in the death of his unfortunate pony. As the surviving part (I know of no fitting name) saw itself after death, so it imagined itself passing through the scenes at Murree, in dream-like confusion.

I think that the favorite explanation of rats, indigestion, hallucination, or incipient fever, as sufficient to account for all "ghosts" are as absurdly wide of the scientific explanation made possible by modern psychology; as Voltaire's celebrated dictum that the shells found on the top of the Alps were dropped there by pilgrims, was absurdly wide of the scientific explanation given by geology. In Voltaire's time the position of these fossils was adduced as a proof of the Noachian account of the Deluge; no other theory was then possible, except Voltaire's, which was more absurd and impossible than the orthodox one. In the same way a few years ago, stigmata were either miraculously or fraudulently produced; Joan of Arc was miraculously inspired or she was an impostor; there was no alternative hypothesis known. And ghosts, clothes and all, were either beheld with our bodily eyes; or they were rats, fever, indigestion or trickery. The whole series of phenomena are now capable of examination from a scientific point of view. Mr. Myers remarks, "Considering how long this scattered belief in the appearances of dead persons has existed it is really extraordinary that so little trouble has been taken to determine whether that belief be well founded or no. For be it observed that there has been just as little diligence, just as little acumen, shown amongst the scoffers as amongst the credulous. In

fact so far as any exact investigation goes, the present subject is almost absolutely new. Something will have been done, I hope, to encourage the quest for further evidence if I am thought to have suggested a parallel between the now known modes of action of the embodied mind, and the possible modes of action of the disembodied mind, which may enable us to see something logically probable—rather than something grotesquely meaningless—in the reported behaviour of the ordinary apparition. Most assuredly if these phenomena are to be explained at all, they must be explained by finding some laws which govern at once these post mortem manifestations and the manifestations of spirits still in the flesh. Two such laws I believe to exist. In the first place I believe that telepathy—the transference of thought through other than sensory channels, exists both between embodied spirits, and as between embodied and disembodied spirits. I hold that there is a continuous series of manifestation of such power beginning with thought transference experiments and hypnosis at a distance, proceeding through experimental apparitions and apparitions coincident with crisis or death, and ending with apparitions after death; the results, in my view, of the continued exercise of the same energy by the departed.

"And in the second place I hold it analogically probable that the thesis of multiple personality, [see *The Open Court*, Nos. 169-171, 'The Hidden Self'] namely, that no known current of man's consciousness exhausts his whole consciousness, and no known self-manifestation expresses man's whole potential being—may hold good for embodied and for disembodied men. And consequently I believe that the self-manifestations of the departed, being communications between states of being almost impassably disunited—must needs form an extreme type of those fugitive and unstable communications between widely different strata of personality of which living minds offer us examples; and that 'ghosts' must therefore as a rule represent . . . mere automatic projections from consciousness which have their centres elsewhere. . . . The present need is not of speculation but of evidence; of a real direction of competent intelligence towards the collection and criticism of a large mass of well-attested narratives. It may indeed be that such records may prove explicable—I can scarcely say by known laws—but by laws whose discovery will only slightly further extend experimental psychology in some of the directions in which it is now rapidly advancing. It may be that these long despised narratives will prove the smooth stones from the brook, and find a vulnerable point in that Goliath of our inscrutable Destiny, against whom so many prouder weapons have been levelled in vain."

Whether we consider the matter a pure coincidence or as a faint adumbration of real psychical facts, it is remarkable that a belief in a multiple personality persisting after death is one of the most widely spread of ethnological beliefs. In this case, as in so many others, popular belief as to facts may be right, whilst interpretation is false. Rainbows and eclipses are phenomena resulting from well-known and well ascertained laws and raise no feelings but those of admiration or intelligent interest in a modern observer. The savage and the semi-civilised man also observed these phenomena, which to the semi-civilised were portents expressing respectively divine repentance for anger, or divine wrath at men's sins; and to men on a lower social plane appeared as animals or demons; the rainbow serpent of the Zulus; the rainbow demon of the Karens,* which devour men. Eclipses were thought by various American tribes to be caused by huge dogs chasing and tearing the moon (Chiquitos); by a demon which hated light (Caribs), by a monstrous beast (Peruvians), by a jaguar (Tupi), all seeking to devour the sun or moon. The idea of the sore danger of sun and moon has run through folk-lore, and comes out in popular belief down to our own day. A recent writer on French folk-lore was surprised during a lunar eclipse to hear sighs and exclamations, "Mon Dieu, qu'elle est souffrante!" and found on inquiry that the poor moon was believed to be the prey of an invisible monster seeking to devour her. So the popular belief in multiple personality, however smothered in superstition and loaded with absurdities, may be the result of very real phenomena.

The Dakotas say that man has four souls, one remaining with the corpse, one staying in the village, one going in the air, and one to the land of spirits. The Karens distinguished between the "ta" which may be defined as the personal life-phantom, and the "thah" which is the responsible moral soul. The Fijians distinguish between a man's "shadow" which goes to Hades, and his "light spirit" which remains near where he dies. Amongst civilised peoples, Egyptian mythology taught that the living man consists of a body, a soul, an intelligence, and an appearance or *eidolon* the "ka." The shadowy and imperceptible "ka" was supposed to dwell in the tomb with mummified body and to perish if the latter were destroyed. Esoteric Buddhism teaches that whilst the soul which has concerned itself with moral and spiritual interests, enjoys unspeakable bliss in "devachan"—in the interval between one incarnation and another; the lower soul which has concerned itself with material things is in the condition of "karma," and haunts the earthly dwelling place of its body. By a pure and holy life, "karma" will no longer exist as

a condition; and the purified higher soul passes no longer into "devachan," but returns into the bosom of the All, and thus enters Nirvâna. In reading of the utterly aimless haunting of the scenes of their life history which is so commonly met with in well-attested cases of phantasms of the dead, I am strongly reminded of the doctrine of karma. (See especially a case given pp. 35-41 of the Proceedings for Dec. 1889). The threefold division of shade, manes and spirit is thus described as existing amongst the Romans.*

*" Bis duo sunt homini, manes, caro, spiritus, umbra :
Quatuor hec loci bis duo suscipiunt.
Terra tegit carnen, tumulum circumvolat umbra,
Manes Orcus habet, spiritus astra petit."*

I have often been puzzled at the confusion which reigns throughout folk-lore, and in the minds of the peasantry of England and Europe, as to the destination of the soul after death. I see now in this apparent confusion, ideas roughly corresponding to the "karma" and "devachan" of Buddhism. The peasant is taught by his Church that his soul after death is destined to go to heaven or hell—with of course in the Catholic church the alternative of Purgatory. However devoutly the Catholic peasant believes in this doctrine and that his soul, if it is saved, will be admitted by St. Peter to Heaven, he at one and the same time believes that he will be conscious of his resting place in his native village, and of the general state of affairs around him. The old ballads of Great Britain, Ireland and Europe are full of this theme; of this eerie consciousness of the dead as they lie in their graves; the mother who "under the moulds" heard her children crying with cold and hunger and comes to comfort them; the dead lover who keeps his tryst; the mother who cannot rest in her grave because her child's tears trickle through, and fall upon her. In Brittany there is a special night when the dead souls pass across the "Baie des Trépassés" on their way back to the old British land in Cornwall, and their sighs and moanings are heard in fancy by the dwellers on the shore. Yet the Bretons are devout Catholics, and believe in Heaven and Hell and Purgatory as the alternative destinations of the soul after death, at the very same time that they think they will be conscious after death of that which has interested them on earth. I have heard a poor old woman express a wish to be buried near a certain little path leading to the side door of our parish church, because it would be "so comfortable" to hear the people passing by to church. Personally, whilst I have little hope, I have a passionate desire for the continuance of life and of personal identity, after the death of the body. But the desire is for a higher life than this, for something more sublime and lasting than "devachan"; and I think any one of us would welcome

* *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I, pp. 266, 296-302. Tylor.

* *Primitive Culture*, Tylor, 1871. Vol. 1, p. 392. Art.: "Animism."

the idea of annihilation, rather than face conditions in which the disembodied spirit hovers round the scenes of its earthly career. But in this case, as in all others, the scientific mind must seek to know the truth and the truth only.

In concluding this article, I would earnestly entreat any reader interested in the subject, not to rest contented with the brief and most imperfect account I have been able to give of Mr. Myers's researches, but to read for themselves the chapter (III) "On recognised Apparitions occurring more than a year after death" of the Proceedings of the Psychological Society, for December, 1889. Part XV.—Part XIV contains an article on "Apparitions occurring soon after Death," by the late Edmund Gurney. Address the Assistant Secretary, 19 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W. C., London.

GHOSTS AND THE BELIEF IN GHOSTS.

THERE is a wholesale revival of a belief in ghosts sweeping over the world and rabid iconoclasts become converts to spiritism and theosophy. Are these the signs of the time? If they are, what kind of a future do they portend?

This theosophic and spiritualistic craze will not be a surprise to those who have watched the materialistic tendencies of our age. It is simply a reaction against that philosophy which feels satisfied to think that mind is matter and consciousness an accidental by-play of force. When materialists become confronted with facts of psychical life with which they are not familiar, they are struck with the untenableness of materialism and will naturally go to the other extreme, viz. to some form of spiritism. Mrs. Besant presents the following eight reasons which induced her to embrace theosophy. She says in the *Review of Reviews*, Dec. 1891 :

"Could find no answer to problems of life and mind in materialism, especially as touching—

1. Hypnotic and mesmeric experiments, clairvoyance, etc.
2. Double consciousness, dreams.
3. Effect on body of mental conceptions.
4. Line between object and subject worlds.
5. Memory, especially as studied in disease.
6. Diseased keenness of sense-perception.
7. Thought-transference.
8. Genius, different types of character in family, etc."

If Mrs. Besant had ever considered the sole and simple fact of consciousness as it exists in herself and as every healthy person experiences it, she would not have been so strangely struck by the abnormal forms of consciousness as they appear in hysterical and mentally diseased people. Hypnotism, mesmerism, and clairvoyance so-called are not more wonderful than the normal consciousness; nor are double consciousness, hyperæsthesia and the diseased forms of memory

stranger than a simple sensation or an act of memory as we experience them thousands of times in every hour of our life.*

As to thought-transference, we should say, that this miracle takes place whenever two men communicate with each other either orally or in written or in printed language. This kind of thought-transference wonderful though it is, is a perfectly intelligible fact, there is nothing mystical about it, for we know the means by which it takes place. There are other kinds of thought-transference. Some such people as Mr. Cumberland know the art of deciphering with great certainty the physiognomical expressions, and of reading certain ideas out of the slight involuntary and emotion-betraying muscular contractions of their fellow-men. However, any thought-transference without any means whatever has never been proved and it would upset all science and philosophy if it ever could be proved.

Mr. W. T. Stead has devoted the whole Christmas number of *The Review of Reviews* to "Real Ghost Stories," and Mrs. Bodington presents us in *The Open Court* with a number of queer accounts collected by herself. She accepts Mr. F. W. H. Myers's view that a ghost is a manifestation of personal energy after death and considers it as an indication that some kind of force can be exercised by a deceased person. I must confess that the accounts given by Mr. Stead as well as by Mrs. Bodington are not of such a nature as to convey any argument that would convince me of the reality of ghosts, doubles, thought-bodies, etc.

I should say with Mrs. Bodington that so far as I can see all these strange phenomena must be interpreted as being "mental," but it appears that I understand something quite different by "mental." Mentality, as I understand it, is subjectivity. Or more fully expressed it is the symbolism of subjectivity, the symbols of subjectivity being representative of objective existences, of relations, of qualities, or any features of objective realities. In other words, mental phenomena are states of awareness, they are feelings, representing some objective state of things. Mrs. Bodington conceives mentality as some kind of force or energy. However, this force or energy apparently does not possess the qualities of that which is usually called force or energy. The ghost, she declares, does not act upon matter but on "mind." It has nothing to do with that energy the sum total of which remains constant in the whole system of the universe as stated in the law of the conservation of energy. It is not a force that can be measured by the acceleration it im-

* For an explanation of the facts of experimental psychology, hypnotism, double consciousness, hyperæsthesia, see the author's *The Soul of Man*, pp. 238-332. In the same book are discussed the problems of the normal facts of soul-life, especially the main problem, viz. that of memory (pp. 60-65 and 418-424) and also the philosophical questions as to the relation between subject and object and the origin of mind (p. 23-45).

parts. Hence the usage of the word is very objectionable and must produce confusion in the very beginning.

It would lead me too far here to discuss the accounts of the ghost stories in detail. I see in every one of those of Mr. Stead as well as in those of Mrs. Bodington, which I have critically read, some flaw that renders it worthless as evidence. So, for instance, people who at once jump to the conclusion that when something or somebody has been seen to pass by, it must have been a ghost, people who say, "It is old Aunt Ann—then Aunt Harriet will die today," are not reliable witnesses. That house will soon be haunted, where people live who believe in ghosts!

Mrs. Bodington says about a strange apparition: "The phenomena of hypnotism give one a clue to the explanation of part of this story." They certainly do give us a clue, but not in the sense that Mrs. Bodington means. A hypnotised person will actually see the things suggested as if they were real, and people who believe in ghosts are predisposed to become suggestible.

But there are stories when two see a ghost at the same time! Is that not a proof of the apparition's objective reality? It seems to me, that it is not. Two or several persons who believe in ghosts, will easily suggest to one another hallucinations. And it is well known, through experiments made on hypnotic subjects, that even memories can be suggested. An hysteric subject can very easily be made to believe that he or she recollects this or that circumstance or event which in reality never happened.

I consider as the best and most striking story of marvellous events the account of Swedenborg's telepathic vision as told by no less an authority than the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant. I quote from Frederick Gerhard's book "The Coming Creed of the World," p. 399-400:

"One of the most striking cases of this kind is the well-known foresight which Swedenborg had of the fire of Stockholm. Kant wrote about it to a friend as follows: 'Toward the end of September 1756, Swedenborg came on a Sunday afternoon, about four o'clock, to Gothenburg. He was received by a friend, who accompanied him to his house, where a little party had been arranged, to which fourteen people had been invited. In the midst of this cheerful company Swedenborg became suddenly silent, and his face had an expression of profound grief. It was about six o'clock in the afternoon. Swedenborg left the room, and returned in a few moments in a state of great terror and anguish. When he was asked what the matter with him, he said that just at this moment a fire had broken out in Stockholm, near St. Mary's Church, and was spreading with terrible rapidity. He left the room repeatedly in a state of great excitement. Among other details, he told the company that the house of one of his friends, whose name he gave, had already been completely destroyed, and that his own house was in great danger. About eight o'clock he exclaimed, in a tone of great joy: "God be thanked! The fire has been extinguished, within only three houses of my own." The

Governor, who had heard of this incident, sent for Swedenborg on Monday morning. The latter gave to the Governor the most detailed description of the fire—the number of houses that had been destroyed, and also the time of the duration of the fire. On Monday evening a messenger arrived who had been sent by a Stockholm merchant to a business friend in Gothenburg; and on the following morning a special courier was sent with a description of the fire to the Governor. Both these men, in every detail, confirmed what Swedenborg had told the previous afternoon.'"

This communication to a friend is a letter to Fräulein Charlotte von Knobloch, dated Königsberg, August 10, 1758, and is found in Kant's collected works. (Ed. Hartenstein, Vol. II, pp. 29-43).

Kant says that of all wonderful stories this account of Swedenborg's prophetic vision of the Stockholm fire "seems to possess the greatest force of evidence and takes away all imaginable doubt." He adds:

"What can be said against the credibility of this event? The friend who writes me this, has investigated all himself not only in Stockholm but also in Gothenburg, which he visited about two months ago. He knows there the best families and had the opportunity of gathering a complete information from a whole city in which most of the eye-witnesses since that short time of 1756 are still living. He has also given me some account about the way how, according to Mr. von Swedenborg, his communion with spirits takes place and his ideas about the state of spirits. This portrait is strange. I have no time to give it here. How much do I wish to question this strange man personally, for my friend is not well versed in the methods of questioning for that which in such cases can give the most light."

Did Kant, one of the most critical minds of the world, give countenance to a story of telepathic vision? It almost appears so. At least he was confronted with an account which he considered in every respect reliable. Mr. Gerhard, a believer in spiritualistic phenomena, quotes the story of Swedenborg's telepathic vision as if it were endorsed by Kant. Yet the quotation although quite correct, is as it stands nevertheless false. It is incomplete. Kant does not lend countenance to the story. The quotation is evidence only of the fact that Kant did not refuse ghost stories off-hand but investigated them carefully. Yet after a thorough investigation Kant found that there was nothing in it, and he was almost ashamed of having been the dupe of his own credulity in what is often regarded as a reliable account of an undubitably honest and well meaning witness. Kant wrote a book on the subject entitled "Dreams of a Visionary explained by the dreams of Metaphysics." In a prefatory remark, he says:

"The empire of shades is the paradise of phantastic people. Here is an infinite territory where they can build at pleasure. Hypochondriac vapors, nursery tales, the marvels of monasteries afford building material in plenty. . . . Where is a philosopher who has not at least once cut a ridiculous figure by being placed between the affirmations of a rational and fully convinced eye-witness and his inner remonstrance of insuperable doubt? Shall he entirely deny the correctness of all such ghost-apparitions? What argument can he propose against them? Should he grant a

single one only of the tales as probable, how important would this concession be! What astounding consequences are drawn if only one such event could be assumed to be proved!

"Since it is with many an equally stupid prejudice to disbelieve without any reason anything of that which with some appearance of truth is told and to believe without inquiry all that which is commonly related, the author of this book in order to avoid the former was partly carried away by the latter. He confesses, not without humiliation, that he was good natured enough to investigate the truth of certain stories of said kind. He found,—as commonly wherever nothing is to be sought,—he found nothing. Well! This in itself may be a sufficient cause to write a book; but there was added something else which has oftener than once induced modest authors to write books—the impetuous request of known and unknown friends."

The problem in my mind is not so much to explain the ghost stories as to explain how people of a scientific education who have accomplished some great things in a certain line of science, such men as Wallace and Crooks, can believe in the reality of ghost stories. We cannot here attempt to discuss the problem, but we may indicate the solution which will explain it. The craving for immortality is as strong in man as the desire for self-preservation, for both are actually one and the same instinct in two forms called by two different names. Those people who cannot conceive the soul in any other way than as an ego so-called, as a metaphysical entity behind the actual reality of psychic life, as a thing in itself independent of time and space and possessing an actual existence as a separate individual being,—such people will naturally hanker after a proof of the reality of such a kind of soul, and as actual proofs are missing, like drowning people they will catch at straws.

It is unnecessary to add that if the soul really were such a being independent in its action of time and space, that proofs of it ought to be plenty, that everybody could experiment with his own soul and should possess an all-sufficient evidence in his own experience.

Mrs. Bodington speaks about the object of her article as a "desperate cause," and I grant it is a desperate cause, nor do I believe that it will ever become a hopeful cause. But then suppose that there be some truth in the idea of a reality of ghosts, and wraiths, of telepathy, telepathic vision, thought-transference, etc., how shall the believers ever prove it, if the unbelievers reject even the evidence of well reputed, rational, and apparently honest eye-witnesses? The believers will say that the case becomes desperate only through the stubborn hard-heartedness of the unbelievers, and not from lack of evidence. What evidence will convince, if this be rejected? Is there no evidence that would be accepted?

Yes! There is an evidence, I should say, that I would accept as convincing. Apply telepathy to practical use and show that it works. Mr. Stead declares that it does work, but he is apparently mistaken. He

says that the Police of London and Chicago occasionally consult clairvoyants. So I wrote to the Chief of the criminal police of Chicago the following letter:

Robt. W. McLaughrey, Esq., Chief of Police.

DEAR SIR: *The Review of Reviews* contains in its Christmas number the following passage concerning "telepathic vision" so called:

"Concerning the enormous advantages which such an astral camera would place in the hands of the detective police, I was not surprised to be told that the officers of the Criminal Investigation Department in London and Chicago occasionally consult clairvoyants as to the place where stolen goods are to be found, or where the missing criminals may be lurking."

I have great doubts as to the correctness of this statement, and as I am about to discuss the subject in a forthcoming number of *The Open Court*, I should like to have a word of information from you directly.

Yours truly,

Dec. 29th, 1891.

P. CARUS.

The reply reads as follows:

So far as I know, no officer of the Police Department of Chicago, has ever consulted a clairvoyant. If any officer has done so it has been on his own account, without any order or countenance from the undersigned or, as I believe, from any of his predecessors.

F. H. MARSH,
Chief Inspector.

R. W. McLAUGHREY,
Gen. Supt. Police.

Dec. 30, 1891.

The two gentlemen when receiving my letter, which was delivered in person by our bookkeeper, Mr. M. A. Sacksteder, enjoyed, as I expected, a hearty laugh, and Mr. Marsh who is in charge of the criminal cases, said, if it were so, it would save them many a sleepless night.

How much cheaper, more direct, and more exact a telepathic communication would be than a cablegram and even than a letter, if it were practicable! How convenient would it be to acquire information concerning some event of importance in history, in the courts or anywhere through the assistance of mental vision so called. Whenever we are in doubt concerning some grave case, how welcome would be the assistance or advice of some ghost endowed with knowledge and wisdom. If this world of ours were the haunting place of ghosts and if we ourselves possessed some telepathic capabilities, all our ethics should be altered. We should devote all our efforts to the development of our spirituality so called and, we should endeavor with might and main to find the key that would lock and unlock the fairyland of the ghosts.

What marvellous possibilities lie hidden alone in opening the fourth dimension, which is reserved now to ghosts and mediums, for purposes of transfer or any other useful employment!

As soon as we shall have a civilisation in which telepathy is one of the means employed in actual business as telegraphy is now, where the appearance of ghosts is as reliable a fact as is now the appearance of

witnesses cited before the court, or where the fourth dimension of space will be employed for the practical purposes of the medical profession as well as of our industrial enterprises, then, but not until then, any disbelief in ghosts and other miracles will cease. P. C.

CURRENT TOPICS.

A CHICAGO post of The Commercial Travellers Protective Association has just been organised at the Grand Pacific hotel, to take part in the "social conflict." One of the chief objects of the association is the protection of commercial travellers against protection; or in the language of the resolution itself, "to secure the repeal of all municipal, county, state, or territorial laws imposing or enforcing a license tax on commercial travellers." There must be a defect in our political economy when laws made for the protection of one class must be repealed for the protection of another. It looks like the science of contradictions, and some day, perhaps, we shall abandon class legislation altogether. The laws against commercial travellers are made for the protection of home trade, and they are in logical harmony with our anti-commercial system. Commercial travellers are mischievous because they are industrious wheels in the machinery of commerce, active and efficient agents in the distribution of products. They provide for consumers better goods at lower prices than the local markets can, therefore the local merchants and producers must be protected against commercial travellers by the device of a license tax. This gathering is an interesting novelty, for it is the only meeting in modern times of any trade, profession, or calling, which has not made a "demand" on congress or the state legislature, or on somebody or other for some special and affirmative legislation in its own exclusive interest.

* * *

ONE of the great Chicago dailies, in the style of an angry schoolmaster reproves the Chicago Freight Bureau for addressing the President of the United States as "Excellency" in a letter asking the appointment of Mr. Morrison to a place on the interstate commerce commission. With solemn forefinger impressing the moral of his lecture on the naughty boys of the Freight Bureau, the schoolmaster says, "It ought to revolt the self-respect of every American to tag the President of the United States with the puerile and pinchbeck handle peculiar to small and effete monarchies. As well call the President of the United States Tremendous Monkey as Excellency, or anything else except the President." The grammar of that rebuke might be improved, but waiving that, the schoolmaster must himself go down to the foot of the class for a fault greater than the mistake made by the boys of the Freight Bureau. He actually tags the President of the United States with the tawdry, illegitimate, puerile, and pinchbeck nickname, "federal executive." Oh, the offense is rank! In sad reproof he says to the boys, "Your letter addresses the federal executive as 'Excellency'"; when he really ought to have said, "Your letter addressed the President as Excellency." He even makes Washington insignificant by giving him the spurious knighthood known only to American snobdom, "the first executive of the nation." If it is in bad taste to inflate the presidential dignity by frothy, foreign titles like "Excellency," "Highness," and carbonic acid gas of that sort, it is worse to shrivel it by mock royalisms of native manufacture, such as "federal executive," "chief executive," and similar dilutions of the expressive and lawful title President.

* * *

The failure of the crops in Russia has afforded the American people an opportunity in their private capacity to show a bountiful nature and a generous desire to relieve the hungry people of that remote country. This desire at least is earnest, and if the way were clear to send relief, the Americans would not permit a single

Russian family to perish of hunger. That failure of the crops has also given us a chance in our national capacity to patronise the Russian government with a good deal of superserviceable sympathy on the one hand, and with a swaggering display of insulting superiority on the other. The Cossacks of the Don, and the multitudinous Russian tribes, are not considered a highly polished people, but the excuse for them is that they are as yet only a semi-barbarous peasantry. What will those Russians, when they read the debates in Congress, think of the politeness and good breeding of our statesmen, who after an ostentatious display of unsolicited assistance, refused it by a vote of 180 to 70, ornamenting the vote with gratuitous and insulting comments on the Russian government. "I will not marry you my pretty maid; nobody asked you sir, she said." In like manner, but with invective and reproaches, we refuse the Russian government what was never asked for, and what perhaps it was presumptuous in us to offer. It is not easy to look with patience on the despotic methods of the Czar, although some of those methods have been practised by our own magistrates with a success that does them credit; but in this case, the Russian law and the Czar are outside the question altogether. Our own position as interpreted by congress is humiliating and inconsistent, for after promising assistance to the starving Russians on their own account, we refuse it on account of their government.

* * *

In *The Open Court* for Dec 31st, I said, "Can a man be charitable by an agent any more than he can be religious by deputy?" This, in referring to a stranger who had handed five hundred dollars to Judge Tuley for distribution by Mrs. Tuley in her charitable work. The moral I tried to draw was that the stranger gave the money only, while Mrs. Tuley gives the charity. I fear I was not successful, for I have received a letter from an anonymous friend in Boston, answering my question thus, "Rich, benevolent people are annoyed beyond measure by beggars, high and low, friends and strangers, wise and foolish. If a person gives five hundred dollars to an institution or to some widely known cause, and his or her name is published, they are subjected to such continuous pleas for help, that it becomes a nuisance. The only remedy is anonymous giving. An institution in which I am interested has just received in pressing need a thousand dollars, but the donor will not give his or her name. This secrecy becomes necessary in self-defence. Therefore I reply, 'a man can be charitable by deputy.'"

* * *

I suspect that my correspondent is the donor of that thousand dollars, and takes advantage of my question to explain why he concealed his name when he gave the money. His argument seemed so plausible that I submitted it for the opinion of some persons whom I know to be experts in the very religion of self-sacrifice and charity. They assure me that the reason given is morally and religiously sound, and that a man can be charitable by deputy. The jury of experts to whom I submitted the problem was composed of three women; and to them I put the following question as a puzzle, "Will the recording angel who keeps the eternal records give the donor of that money credit for five hundred dollars worth of charity in the judgment ledger of good and evil deeds?" Two of them promptly answered "Yes"; and then I set for them this trap, "What credit will Mrs. Tuley get for distributing the money?" They were not at all confused, but fluently replied, "She also will get credit for five hundred dollars worth of charity." Then I sprung the trap like a cunning lawyer, and with a mocking sneer I said, "So the celestial book-keeper gives a thousand dollars credit for five hundred dollars, eh." What was my surprise to find myself in the trap, and the ladies outside of it saying, "Oh, certainly; for there may be a million dollars worth of charity in five hundred dollars, as there may be not a penny's worth"; and they brought in the widow's

mite as evidence of that. The third woman said that although Mrs. Tuley would get credit for five hundred dollars in charity, the masculine donor would have to submit to a small discount for shirking the distribution of the fund, and therefore she did not think that he would get credit for more than four hundred and ninety-five dollars. As this was a concession to my argument amounting to a paltry five dollars, I rejected it with disdain, and as women are too illogical to reason with, I surrender. Although not convinced, I throw up my brief, and agree that a man may be charitable by deputy.

* * *

Having a foolish weakness for studying both sides of a question, I take a republican paper and a democratic paper, under the delusion that the cerebral friction made by their contradictions will brighten my faculties and polish up my mind. I am now convinced that the man who studies only one side enjoys his reading more, and keeps his nerves in better tone than the ambidextrous logic shuffler who studies both sides. For instance, picking up my papers of Tuesday, I read about the organisation of the Ohio senate by the republicans; and the democratic organ tells me that "In the senate an incident occurred which illustrates the partisan and revolutionary character of Ohio republican politics." It then describes the unseating of Daniel Gaumer, a democrat who it claims was lawfully elected, and the seating of George Iden his republican competitor who was not elected at all. My republican paper, speaking of the same transaction, tells me that "The partisan and revolutionary attempt of the democrats to seat the fraudulent 'claimant' Mr. Daniel Gaumer, was promptly rebuked by the seating of Mr. George Iden the lawfully elected candidate." Picking up my papers on Wednesday, I read therein about the organisation of the New York senate by the democrats. My democratic paper which had been so grievously wounded on Tuesday by the wickedness of the Ohio senate, had sufficiently recovered on Wednesday to congratulate the civilised world that "As soon as the New York senate was organised the democrats righteously and patriotically seated Charles A. Walker for the 27th district, which was vacant"; and this "partisan and revolutionary" proceeding was vehemently stigmatised by my republican paper as "the death blow to representative government in the United States." Foreigners, who do not appreciate American humor may think from the reading of our own papers that party necessity in this country consecrates any injustice and sanctifies any wrong.

* * *

Wise is the man, I say again, who reads but one side, for he learns only about the wickedness of the opposite party; while the inquisitive innocent who reads both sides, pampers himself into cynicism, making himself doubly miserable by feeding on the delinquencies of both parties; and when he croaks, as a cynic must, he makes other people miserable too. Seeking further instruction and information by reading both sides, I learn from my republican paper that "A bill has been introduced into the Ohio legislature to redistrict and reapportion the state, so as to correct the disgraceful gerrymander perpetrated by the democratic majority in the last legislature;" and my democratic paper of the same date informs me that "A bill has been presented in the New York legislature to redistrict and reapportion the state so as to correct the disgraceful gerrymander perpetrated by the late republican majority." The coincidence of expression and thought reminds me of the time when Bill Gibbs, an Englishman, and Hugh Riley, an Irishman, were opposing candidates for the office of Sheriff of Marble county. An English friend of mine was consulted by a fellow countryman, who inquired which of the candidates he ought to vote for; and my friend replied, "Well, they both want to plunder the county in the office of sheriff. One of

them is an English thief, the other is an Irish thief, and it is our business to stick to the English thief." The English thief was elected; and therein lies the political ethics of "the two great parties." M. M. TRUMBULL.

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CONTENTS OF NO. 229.

A MODERN VIEW OF GHOSTS. (Concluded.) ALICE BODINGTON..... 3103
GHOSTS AND THE BELIEF IN GHOSTS. EDITOR.. 3106
CURRENT TOPICS. The Law Against Commercial Travellers. The President's Title. Congress and the Czar. Charitable by Deputy. The Folly of Studying both Sides. GEN. M. M. TRUMBULL..... 3109