

AN AMAZING EXPERIMENT

Charles Drayton Thomas

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Introduction

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

I AM about to relate a remarkable incident in my researches describing how a number of convincing messages from their deceased child were transmitted to distant strangers.

The messages of affection were intended for his own people, but I have permission from the family to make public the evidence by which the boy's identity was established. This includes his reference to a most unusual photograph which was taken shortly before his death in which he is seen in the fancy dress he wore at a local festival.

I shall show how he described a favourite walk which his people instantly recognized. As this comprised no fewer than eight separate points, all of which proved correct, the description passes far beyond any likelihood of chance. The boy further described roads and streets near his home, including the name of one where he went to school; readers will be able to compare these descriptions with the sketch afterwards sent by the family to show me how accurately this message had come through.



Bobbie, aged four, with Mr. Hatch.

How the boy came to be infected by the disease from which he died had never been guessed, but these messages led to the discovery that he had frequently played near an infected pool; a fact which had been entirely unknown to the family until inquiries were set on foot after receiving these communications.

The whole story is here set forth in full, together with a numerical valuation of the evidence which shows how small a proportion of the messages failed of recognition. The account was first published in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, and has been subject to the keen examination of critics, some of whom were stout disbelievers in the possibility of communications from the next life. I shall give the more important of these criticisms together with my replies.

The whole case forms a strikingly forceful argument for the reality of communication from the Beyond.

Part 1: How Identity was Established

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

THE STORY of Bobbie Newlove's messages would, in earlier days, have seemed incredible or miraculous. It was made possible by experience gained during years of investigation and experiment.

Quite early in life it was my good fortune to meet a lady whose unusual mentality had afforded experiences such as come to few. She had not sought them and had no explanation to offer except that God had permitted her to see and hear things to which the majority are blind and deaf. The incidents she described made a deep impression, and aroused in me a desire to learn the laws which govern and make possible such experiences.

By reading and inquiry it later came to my knowledge that, as with St. Paul in New Testament days, the condition of mind termed *trance* opens the way for communications from those who, having passed through death, wish to speak to their friends on earth.

I resolved to study the trance state, and this became possible in 1917 when making the acquaintance of one whose psychical constitution permitted her to fall into trance as easily as if it were natural sleep. To her goodwill in allowing me to study with her is due the result now to be recorded.

As I understand it some change takes place with the oncoming of trance which enables one to remain resting in unconsciousness while mind and brain are at the disposal of those who, having left behind at death their physical body, require the temporary use of such an organism if they are to convey their thoughts to us in spoken words.



Plate 1: Bobbie, aged nine, with his mother.

To use another's organism must be far from easy, and so those who come from realms invisible to speak usually avail themselves of the help of one who has long practised the process. This intermediary is technically termed the Control. The one I work with has co-operated in this manner for many years and delights to help those wishing to speak. She is named Fedra.

The process, therefore, as I understand it, is that the invisible visitors give Fedra an idea of what they wish to say and Fedra then proceeds to influence the entranced brain and mind in such a way that the substance of the message is spoken by the sleeper's lips.

Sometimes Fedra phrases the message in her own words, while at other times she is able to give it verbatim. More often than not the process is half-and-half; much depends upon causes which, like the weather or one's moods, are frequently altering and cannot be relied upon to remain the same from hour to hour.

Since February, 1917, I have enjoyed frequent conversations, through Fedra's help, with my father, John Drayton Thomas, a Wesleyan minister for forty years, who died in 1903. When in 1920 my sister Etta joined him she, too, began to converse with me by the same method.

Had it not been for their help it is probable that my attempt to bring Bobbie Newlove into touch with his sorrowing family would have been less successful than it happily proved

to be.

My reasons for certainty that it is my own father and sister who speak during these trances have been given in previous publications and need not be repeated here.

It was in September, 1932, that I first heard of Bobbie. A letter came from Nelson, in Lancashire, asking if I would attempt to obtain information from a boy of ten who had recently died from diphtheria. The writer, a Mr. Hatch, gave no unnecessary information, the relevant portion of his letter ran thus:

"For ten years my stepdaughter has lived with me and my wife, and her little boy has been the life and centre of our lives. He was particularly intelligent and extraordinarily loving and lovable. A few weeks ago he died suddenly of diphtheria, aged 10. The loss is so dreadful that we feel we must ask if you can in any way obtain comfort similar to that recounted in your book, *Life Beyond Death*.

"We feel that the very strong love and comradeship we had should make communication possible, if it is ever possible. I confess that my education (I have an honours degree in science) makes my faith in such matters very halting.

"If it is too soon for the boy to communicate, could not other friends or relatives who have passed over give us some knowledge and consolation?"

My reply discouraged expectation of success; but as I had helped bereaved people on previous occasions, I resolved to make the attempt. Readers who wish to know about those earlier efforts and their varying results are referred to the account in *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, May, 1935, entitled 'A Consideration of a Series of Proxy Sittings'.

I asked Divine aid and then sought to inform the boy of my willingness to help him, addressing him mentally from time to time with instructions how to do his part. I also asked my father and sister to assist by seeking out the boy and inviting him to accompany them to my next trance conversation.

Meanwhile the family remained unaware that I was attempting to make contact with the child. It was in these circumstances that I took the letter to my sitting of November 4th, 1932, and at an appropriate moment said:

"I have a very earnest request for news of a little boy Bobbie." I then suggested that Feda should hold the letter. She accepted the idea. Needless to say I had folded it in such a way that no information could be ascertained by glancing at it. Added to this I watched carefully during the few minutes it was in the medium's hands, and observed that her eyes did not open.

Here is part of the first report which the Newlove family received from me, together with their replies.

The numbers in brackets are those used in the unabbreviated account published in *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, December, 1935, and are retained here for convenience in referring to that account.

8) FEDA: Do you know if he was connected with a town, not London but a town, not one of the biggest in the provinces?

[This was, as I knew, correct for Nelson where Bobbie had lived.]

9) FEDA: Is there something to do with a place - does anybody go there to do some special study, not like Oxford or Cambridge, Eton or Harrow?

C.D.T.: No, it is a manufacturing town.

FEDA: The studying they are doing is not so much of a scholastic kind. It is more as if they are learning to do something in a practical way.

C.D.T.: And who is this that is studying?

FEDA: Somebody connected with the boy, like making a study of how to make something, like specializing in the making of something, not just making it and turning it out with a machine, but a kind of study of it.

[After a short break this subject was continued, see below.]

10) FEDA: It is a busy place, but not one of the very biggest of those towns. I don't think you would call it the biggest of those towns, and yet it is a largish place where they are concentrating on important things.

C.D.T.: I should say that is correct, so far as I know.

[Mr. Hatch wrote: "This is unquestionably an accurate description of Nelson.")(1)

(1) Short comments interspersed between quotations from the record of the sittings are in square brackets. These comments, unless there is some statement to the contrary, are based upon information received from Mr. Hatch or Mrs. Newlove, either in letters or verbally when I made their acquaintance during my visits to Nelson in June and July, 1933.

11) FEDA: Do you know if some manufacturing places are on the banks of a canal or river there? It does not feel pretty enough to call a river because of the buildings and the things on the side of it.

[There is a river and a canal, and there are factories on the banks of the river. Bobbie knew both river and canal.]

FEDA: (Resuming previous theme 9.) Oh, are they partly making some stuff, there in this place, is it earthenware or pottery, something like stone? I think they are making more than one thing there, but I do get a feeling of something being made of a hard nature, something like stone, something is being put together, I get a feeling of it being put together very closely in lumps; it is not steel or iron or metal, it is more like things being made, and I think it is rather a new industry.

[Mr. Hatch replied: "Bobbie had a great friend who is a working man engaged usually in making mortar and cement. He took a great interest in the boy and was most distressed when he died. Later he suggested that he should make a concrete cross for the grave. We thankfully agreed, feeling that work with real love behind it was better than anything bought from a monumental mason. This friend has never made one before and had to 'make a study of how to make something'."]

Readers will feel that this is not convincing. When, however, after the conclusion of these sittings I visited Nelson and met the person above alluded to, Mr. Burrows, and saw the grave-the cross not yet erected, but blocks of concrete making a curb with a concrete platform round the grave and noticing that the concrete was made in small portions fitted together, I realized how apposite had been the above description. Mr. Burrows will be mentioned hereafter. Bobbie greatly admired him; for, in addition to teaching Bobbie gymnastics and boxing, Mr. Burrows was the professional at the skating rink, and captain of the Rink Hockey Club. See Plate 2.

Plate 2: The grave with its concrete surround.

It is only my fear that readers will not be in a position, at this point, to share my opinion that Feda's remarks actually apply to the concrete-and-cement work around Bobbie's grave, that restrains me from pointing out in detail how clear it is that Feda did not know what it was she was describing. But it is unwise to build upon inadequate foundations, and there will be other opportunities, as we proceed, for illustrating this fact, namely, that the mind originating the message is not Feda's and that Feda is frequently unable to realize what it is that she is describing. There is abundant evidence indicating that Feda's part is simply to transmit from one who knows the facts, and who is trying amid difficulties to convey information which can be recognized by those for whom it is intended.

Several further statements were made, all proving more or less correct; but on the whole I considered the result poor.

Mr. Hatch's reaction to the first sitting may be judged from the following passage which I extract from his letter of comments:

"If Bobbie were trying to communicate I cannot believe that he would refer to any of the matters mentioned. Still, as you say, it is a foundation, and if you will be good enough to try again we shall indeed be grateful.

"I have heard it said that those who are desperately anxious for evidence are very credulous. I do not think it is so with me. My fear is lest I should be deceived by evidence that can be explained by some other faculty of the mind, perhaps one that has not been investigated as yet."

Before passing from this first attempt it may be interesting to draw attention to the difficult problem of Psychometry. This is the term applied to the gathering of information about the history of an object or its owner, merely by handling it. The information goes far beyond anything which might be gleaned from inspecting the object. Although this has been demonstrated by repeated experiment, there is as yet no satisfactory and generally accepted explanation of the process involved. The psychometrist knows no more how it happens than does the observer. We do not understand what part the object psychometrized plays in the process of eliciting information. Some have supposed that information is fixed upon the object in some way, and that the faculty of psychometry develops, or interprets, this cryptic impression. It is not easy to imagine how information can be thus fixed upon an object, although we have rough analogies in the gramophone record, and in exposed but undeveloped photographic plates, also in writing with invisible ink which can be made legible by chemical treatment. Let us accept the hypothesis, however, and call it No. 1.

There is the further hypothesis, No. 2, which is that a psychometrist obtains the information from some person incarnate or discarnate, who is familiar with the facts required.

No. 1 explains psychometry as *perception* and interpretation of something recorded on the article.

No. 2 explains it as *reception* of information relating to the article.

What exactly happened when I placed Mr. Hatch's letter in the hands of the medium one cannot say, but it may well be that there was a combination of both the above methods.

Before Feda had been speaking many sentences she said:

FEDA: I don't know whether I am getting things from the letter or because the boy is near or here. I am not quite sure yet, I can't be sure whether I am getting it there or here.

C.D.T.: It might be coming from either side, here or yonder?

FEDA: Yes.

C.D.T.: Do you think that Etta (i.e., my sister, who is an experienced communicator) could get into touch with the boy through this letter?

FEDA: That is why I am holding it. I think the boy is linked up with them. I keep feeling a pull from this, but I get a pull from someone else also.

Thus there was uncertainty whether, at this early stage, information was being obtained by psychometry, or whether it was being given to Feda by some mind in possession of the facts.

I have discussed Psychometry in my book *The Mental Phenomena of Spiritualism* (published by the L.S.A., 16, Queensberry Place, London, S.W.7.) from which is taken the further description placed in the Appendix of this book.

A second attempt some weeks later was more successful.

31) FEDA: They had been trying to make something - this is nothing to do with what I said about building - they had been doing something intricate in the house that Bobbie was interested in, they got a lot of parts for it, like fixing them all up together. They were wanting some other parts for it not long before Bobbie passed over.

[Mr. Burrows was fitting up a gymnasium for Bobbie and it was not yet finished. They still required a horizontal ladder and other items. It was being made in an upstairs room and Mr. Burrows added to it each time he called. Bobbie's diary has the following references:

March 31. The instructor came and put up two parts of gymnasium.

May 10. Instructor came and fixed up parallel bars.

June 15. Got bell-bar for gym.] See Plate 3. (ISS note: Plate 3 is currently unavailable).

34) FEDA: What is that you are showing me? Will you ask is there a photograph of Bobbie in a rather peculiar position? I see him full faced, or very nearly full faced, but with something in front of him, as if there is a board in front of him.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "This is certainly remarkable. The last photograph we have of Bobbie is in fancy dress. He is the Jack of Hearts with boards back and front like a sandwich-man. On his head is a crown as in a pack of cards.] See Plate 4.

35) FEDA: Will you ask also if he had been given - think it must have been a joke - something new that he was fond of using or wearing on his head, something round; if it was a cap it had no peak to it. He used to put it on his head and I think he liked it. It was as if he thought it was rather important putting this round thing on his head.

[This apparently refers to the crown. He was so fond of putting it on that his mother had to check him lest it should be worn out.]

Six months later this jack of Hearts cap was again alluded to.

111) FEDA: His mother has been thinking something about a cap, thinking something rather special of it lately. It is only a little thing, but he just wanted her to know it.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "Yes, she has been thinking about his cap."]

112) FEDA: She came across something with a special badge on it. It is not a heart exactly, but the lower part is rather shaped like a heart, at the bottom it is heart-shaped. It is something like a straight line goes through the top of it, and a little upstanding piece comes out of the top.

Mr. Hatch replied that they knew no badge of this shape. On my visit to Nelson I asked whether Bobbie had a badge on his school sports jacket, or other kind of badge. They knew of none. I therefore marked this as a failure. Later in the day I was shown the boards and cap which had been spoken of in an earlier sitting, and of which I wished to take a photograph. On seeing the Jack of Hearts cap I recognized it as answering exactly to this description. Cf. photograph (Plate 5) and notice the heart on the front of the crown or cap, with the line going each side the top of the heart, and the "little upstanding piece at the top". The one inaccuracy was the statement that "it is not a heart exactly", unless one takes this to refer to the cap itself, upon which the heart is fixed. Referring to my notes I saw the words, "she came across something with a special badge on it". A question elicited the reply that Bobbie's mother had turned out this paper crown while spring cleaning. The date of this sitting agrees closely with the time when it had come under her notice.



Plate 4: Bobbie as Jack of Hearts.



Plate 5: (B) The special cap. (C) Sandwich boards worn at the Gala.

The photograph of Bobbie's little diary, see Plate 6, shows under June 4th, the words: "Went to Gala, walked in fancy dress." (ISS note: Plate 6 is currently unavailable.) This outstanding event in the child's life would certainly have remained a pleasant memory and was therefore suitable to be given to his people as an evidence that it was their boy Bobbie who sent the messages.

A letter from Mr. Hatch contained the following appreciation of the earlier reference to boards and cap (34, 35).

"The first two items of your notes are certainly remarkable. If one were to take at random a huge number of photographs of children there might be somewhere a child behind some kind of board or tray. Probably, however, the proportion would not be

more than one in a thousand. The second point, *something round without a peak on his head, of the nature of a joke, and that he was pleased at having*, is certainly a fifty to one chance. So that the chances against the two *being coincidence* are, I think, at least fifty thousand to one."

I was by this time assured that my effort to convey messages from Bobbie to his friends was going to be successful. Had this been the first occasion of my receiving indubitable evidence of identity from one who had been unknown to me in life, I should have felt profoundly thrilled. But this was not the first time by many. My mind goes back to a day in 1917 when I first felt the overwhelming wonder, the rush of a new realization, which came with the conviction that I had obtained *complete proof* that those who had passed through death were able to resume intercourse with earth. It is one thing to believe on hearsay that this happened in Bible times, but it is something very different to find it happening now, and to realize that it is happening to oneself. The wonder increases on discovering that not only one's nearest and dearest are speaking, but that the laws of communication are such that one can sometimes be the means of transmitting messages from strangers to their sorrowing friends.

In previous attempts to obtain evidence from people beyond death, whom I did not know, and on behalf of their friends on earth whom I had not seen, one or two sittings had sufficed. In the present case there emerged a special feature which decided me to persevere. It may be called "The Mystery of the Pipes" and will be described fully in the second part of this book.

Passing over messages of affection, and references to other matters, we will confine ourselves for the present to a study of the *evidence* by which the boy established his identity.

Only a selection is given here, and it will be understood that it was obtained in the course of a number of sittings, which were mostly occupied by matters relating to myself and having no reference to Bobbie Newlove. The items selected are given for the most part in the order I received them.

36) FEDA: What does Bobbie want to say about his nose, his nose hurt? (Hand rubs nose.)

He is making me feel as if something had hurt his nose on the side towards the end of his earthly life. Oh, he doesn't think it caused his passing or anything of that kind.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "Bobbie was learning to box, and on the last lesson his instructor, usually very gentle with him, gave him a blow on the nose 'which brought tears to his eyes. He complained afterwards that it hurt when washed.'" When, on visiting the house, I was shown Bobbie's little diary, I noticed that he humorously referred to this under its date thus: "June 14. The instructor came. Burst my nose." This happened shortly before Bobbie's death.] See Plate 3. (ISS note: Plate 3 is currently unavailable.)

39) FEDA: Did I tell you last time about a girl a little older than Bobbie that he was fond of? She seemed as if very kind to him, like giving up things to him and being very nice to him, and this girl has been I can't get this quite - but it is something to do with a ball that belonged to Bobbie. I don't think this is much good - you see I am not getting this from Mr. John now, I am getting it from Bobbie. Something this girl has been doing about a ball that Bobbie was fond of when he was here. the girl has been doing something with it.

[There was a child Marjorie at the Rink who had a special part which she played at the commencement of hockey matches. The team termed her their mascot, and she began their competitions by an exhibition of skating in which she finally drove a ball into the goal. Bobbie enjoyed watching this. She was twelve years old and they were great friends. While Marjorie was away on a visit Bobbie said to his mother: "If I don't see

Marjorie soon I shall go mad." This was only a month before his death. The sittings allude to her several times. The ball did not, of course, belong to Bobbie although he may at times have joined in playing with it; for he often skated with Marjorie.]

As we shall presently see, these messages show intimate knowledge of places in which Bobbie had been interested. Here is a description of a favourite walk.

40) FED: And will you ask them if he went to a place where there was a broken stile? At least it may not have been the stile itself that you put your foot on was broken, but a part of the construction through which the stile was made was broken.

41) And there was a long footpath there too, part of it seems to go between something, like as if you were going between something rather high, I get like a high wall on one side. There is not usually building near stiles now, but I get the feeling of something close to the path and the stile.

42) When you get over the stile it is more open.

43) Then I think there is a church with a group of trees round it.

44) I feel you have only to go a little way over the stile, and there is something that would be dangerous near to this stile, something you can fall down, as if you would say to children: "Now, don't go that way." It is something you could fall down into.

45) And it is wet too; I can't see the water - think they want me to say that - and yet it feels sticky and wet there.

46) This is a place that Bobbie would know very well, would have reason to know. He has been thinking of it lately when he has been with his people on the earth. He must have been near this place with them and it made him think about it again, whereas he would have forgotten it.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "This is very good. A favourite walk was by a stile. Whether it is damaged I do not know, but I will find out. And beyond it is a church with trees. His body is buried in the churchyard. Past the stile the path leads to a quarry, at the foot of which is water. (See Plate 7.) Bobbie wanted to go there to play, but we forbade it." Mr. Hatch wrote later: "I have been the walk described in your last notes, but cannot find any damaged stile; however, these last messages are the best we have had."]



Plate 7: Path by quarry, now protected by railings; a stile was formerly at its upper end.

Mr. Hatch enclosed a plan of his walk, which is here reproduced (Plan A). (ISS note: Plan A is currently unavailable.) The stile, which had been there in Bobbie's time, and *was* broken, had now been completely removed. Beyond the site of this stile a footpath runs along the precipitous edge of a quarry. Bobbie's mother tells me that she used to regard this unprotected path as dangerous. It is now made safe by a fence. There is no high wall on the side opposite the quarry but a row of houses; these houses might be described as "something rather high" and "like a high wall on one side". "When you get over the stile it is more open"; yes, there is an extensive view over the quarry on the left. (See Plate 8) "Church with a group of trees round it"; this is a few minutes' walk from the quarry, not connected with it, but part of a walk which the family often took. "He must have been near this place with them," etc.; Mr. Hatch adds: "Yes, almost every time we have gone out since his passing we have been either to the grave or to a friend who lives near."

On re-reading the above, while preparing this paper, I mistakenly assumed that the walk which the family often took included the path by the stile. It therefore seemed inexplicable that, if passing the site of the stile "almost every time we have been out since his passing" - a period of several weeks - they should have been unaware of the stile and its subsequent removal.



Plate 8: View over quarry from the path.

To my letter of inquiry about this Mr. Hatch replied on February 24th, 1935: "You are mistaken in thinking that we had often taken the walk by the stile *after* Bobbie's death. The walk we did take was up the road to the grave. Gwen (i.e., Mrs. Newlove) went the walk after your sitting and could not find the stile, though she had thought there was one. We then wrote you that the description of the walk was correct except that there was no broken stile. Some weeks afterwards I found from a friend that a broken stile had been there but had been removed shortly before Bobbie's death."

Conspicuous among Bobbie's communications were detailed descriptions of the neighbourhood given from the boy's point of view. This was not the sort of information which could have been gathered from map or guide-book but exactly the kind which would result from a boy's memory of favourite walks near his home. The first of these descriptions had, as we have just seen, several points, all given with accuracy except one, which referred to a broken stile. But that in itself was particularly interesting because the broken stile *had been there during the boy's lifetime* but was removed before the date of the sitting. This shows us that the description was given from the memory of one who had known the facts in Bobbie's lifetime, and not from any clairvoyance whether of medium or control. The latter hypothesis would lead us into the difficulty of having to suggest how clairvoyance could be directed to the right town, and then trace, amidst its many scores of streets and paths, the particular route which had been the favourite walk of the family.

It is important to remember that *I gave away no least clue* of any sort as to the town in which Bobbie had lived.

The description of a broken stile which no longer exists, but which did exist in the communicator's lifetime, was paralleled in one of my previous proxy experiments where was given a detailed and minutely accurate description of a garden. But that description, in its most striking features, was correct only for the *summer time*, whereas it was received in the *winter*. In that case, as in the above, clairvoyance is entirely ruled out.

In January, 1933, Mr. Hatch wrote as follows:

"Is it possible for you to put two or three questions? If they were answered correctly it would be well-nigh overwhelming proof of survival. I leave it to you, of course, but to save time I append the questions:

"1. What did Bobbie keep in the bathroom cupboard?

"2. Where did he like to go with his Mummie last winter in the evenings and was looking forward to going again this winter?

"3. What did he do in the attic besides boxing?"

I put these questions, and it will be observed as we proceed that two of them were answered with some detail. It is as well to mention here that I thought it would be interesting to compare the result with my own guesses. I therefore wrote to Mr. Hatch

that I guessed:

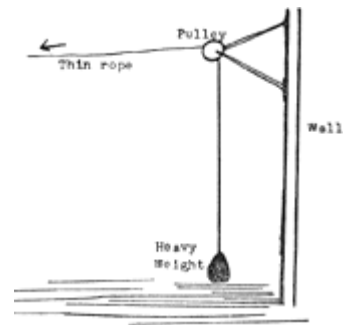
1) Boat, 2) the Pictures, or Ice Skating-rink, 3) playing with trains. It became clear after the next few sittings that my alternative guess for number 2), Skating-rink, was partly correct. I did not learn until the sittings were completed that my guess for 1), Boat, was also correct. But it is, perhaps, of some significance in view of the telepathic hypothesis, that this never emerged in replies to these questions, nor did my third guess, which proved completely wrong.

FEDA: Etta says that she has brought the boy; you know, Bobbie Newlove, and that he wanted to say one or two things before they went on to anything else.

C.D.T.: Bobbie. I can't think what it was you used to do in the attic besides boxing. I have been trying to guess.

8) FEDA: What are you showing me? Did you pull a string out of the wall? Bobbie did some funny things for a boy, now look, he is going to the wall and he seems as if he is untwisting something and he is pulling something from the wall, either thick string or rope, and on the end he seems to be fixing something carefully. That is important, what he is doing with it. It is the pulling it out that seems to be the important thing. It is something about drawing it out as far as is possible and then letting it go back to the wall again. It is something that he seemed to do rather regularly.

[Mr. Hatch: "This is good; in the attic he had among other things, an arrangement for strengthening the muscles. The drawing appended will show you the idea. Drawing it out was the important thing, and he did it rather regularly." (See drawing.)



This is evidently the answer to question No. 3, which was: "What did he do in the attic besides boxing?"

On a later occasion I repeated these questions because unaware at the time whether or not they had been answered.

C.D.T.: Bobbie, have you given the answers to those three things your mother asks, they were - 1) What was kept in the bathroom cupboard? 2) What did you do in the attic besides boxing? and 3) Where did you go last winter evenings with your mother and were hoping to go again this winter? It may be that you have given the answers already.

71) FEDA: When he went with his mother didn't he carry something for her? I feel it is rather important that he carried something for her, not something that he put under his arm, but something swinging a bit.

[Mr. Hatch: "Bobbie was keenly interested in roller-skating and it is curious that you guessed correctly this answer to the question about what he did on winter evenings. Bobbie used to carry his skates swinging. His mother sometimes offered to carry them but he would never allow her to do so. Possibly he feels that he carried them to save her trouble."]

72) FEDA: And when they walked did he hold her arm? I don't know if he always did this, but I get a very strong feeling of holding her arm. Boys don't usually do that, but I seem to get him doing this when they went out at night.

[Mr. Hatch: "Yes, correct."]

73) FEDA: They had spoken and thought about buying something new for this winter

that was going to be rather expensive in connection with where they were going together. It was a bit expensive, but it would be rather an improvement on what they had. He enjoyed going to this place, and he would talk about it a lot afterwards, and about the progress they had made.

[Mr. Hatch: "There was some talk of a pair of skates for his mother. She had none, but used a pair from the rink. It is true that he enjoyed going and would talk about the progress they had made."]

74) FEDA: What a funny place it is, there did not seem much furniture there. Will you ask if it was rather a bare place, because I am getting a feeling of a place that is rather bare, perhaps it is purposely bare? It feels as if it was a place where they cleared the furniture; it feels as if there were a lot of other people there too. I keep hearing voices. That has to do with where they went on winter evenings, and they hoped to go again, only after buying something special.

C.D.T.: He has not told you what it is?

FEDA: No, I can't get what it is.

[Mr. Hatch: "A correct description of the rink."]

C.D.T.: Can you show Feda what you did in the attic?

78) FEDA: He is lying on the floor. I suppose you are lying on the floor? He is showing me something like stretched on the floor. I think he wants me to go flat on the floor or something. It feels as if I have got to lie on the floor and move something. I want to waggle altogether, sort of squirm about. I think my hands and feet and head is going. That is all I can get about it.

[Mr. Hatch: "Lying on the floor is correct. Bobbie was given drills there; raising legs while on his back, raising the body from the hands and toes, and various tricks."]

Two weeks later I returned to the question.

C.D.T.: And what else did you do in the attic besides exercises to strengthen the muscles? You boxed, but you did other things there too?

95) FEDA: What is he pretending to be? Is he being silly? He is jumping about, putting his hands like that - (here medium's arms were thrown upward), bowing and like that. He is pretending to be acting, like clowns or something; it is something like that he did, because he made me feel he wanted to be something like posing and all that.

[Mr. Hatch: "I think this is good. We had fitted up the attic as a gymnasium. The 'bowing' is a good description of his movements when lifting dumb-bells or other weights."]

FEDA: Some of the things I have got for them I don't understand, and just a little bit of a twist would make them get the wrong meaning.

91) FEDA: And did he use something made of celluloid, something that he used and they wanted him to stop using it? They thought it might make a flame or explosion.

[Mr. Hatch: "Yes, he had bought a secondhand cinematograph lantern, and we were a little nervous about the celluloid films."]

92) FEDA: Will you ask his mother whether she had the bathroom done after he passed over, the walls, because he remembers she wanted to have them done? There was

something that she was talking about having done before he passed over, about the bathroom; talking about the bathroom reminded him.

[The family say that parts of the bathroom wall and ceiling needed attention where the lincrusta was loose. This had been put right since Bobbie's passing.]

106) FEDA: Are Bobbie's people helping a very old person? I forget what Bobbie told me, but I think it was an old lady, whom they were sorry for and doing their utmost for, and Bobbie is very pleased about it. Bobbie's people feel they must give special help for the time being.

[The family informed me that, at the date of this sitting, they were thinking of sending daily dinners, and were inclined to select as the recipient a certain old lady whom they knew. Shortly after this they decided upon this widow, aged 63, but who looks older and is toothless. They were still sending dinners to her when I visited them in June, 1933.]

113) FEDA: Wait a bit, don't be in a hurry. (Long pause.) "Church." Wait a minute, Bobbie. I don't see quite what you mean. (This was all whispered.) "Church," something about a church. I don't know - anyhow he is showing me a church, the outside of a church, and the churchyard.

C.D.T.: Church and churchyard?

FEDA: Yes, he is taking me to the side. I think the right-hand side of the church as you face it. I think it is somewhere his mother has been lately. Not going into the church, but going down into the churchyard to the right, and I think the ground slopes down a bit just there too. It is somewhere his mother has been lately, and where she was thinking of him very much.

(The above was whispered softly and with long pauses between the sentences.)

[Mr. Hatch: "This is quite correct; his grave is in just the position indicated."]

On visiting Nelson I found that this description was exact. One enters the gate, passing the stocks, which are on the left side of the path; then, going along the right-hand side of the church, the ground distinctly sloping downwards, one comes to the grave. It was true that his mother had been there shortly before this sitting, indeed, she frequently goes there, and naturally thinks then of Bobbie.]

(127 and 128) FEDA: He thinks his mother wants a new dressing-gown for herself.

[His mother had been to Manchester and, while there, purchased material for a dressing-gown, as requested by her mother. It was not for Bobbie's mother herself, but she had thought much about it.]

129) FEDA: He wanted to tell his mother that he is usually with her early in the mornings. Will you ask her if cardboard boxes made her think of him just lately?

[Mr. Hatch: "Correct. It was in connection with the spring cleaning."]

C.D.T.: I expect she thinks of you a great deal, Bobbie.

130) FEDA: She and I were such chums. We were not so much like mother and son, we were chums. He says he felt so grown up, sometimes she felt as if he was taking her out, felt really as if he was taking her. He says: "I think she will understand if you tell her." And she used to love to plan things she and I would do and go to together, especially that last year in which I was on the earth. I seemed to have got more grown up than ever, and she depended on me so much that last nine months. I had grown

more, so that she and I could enjoy things together that usually are enjoyed by two people of just the same age, and we really enjoyed them as if we were the same age; and she used to tell me things that she had done, and even about things she had bought, you know. She would even mention things about her clothes which I suppose most mothers don't do, but she used to often tell me about things she had bought.

"I was always happiest when I was with her," he says. "She was like another boy as well as a mother. When you know her better you will think she is a boy too."

"She is not mannish to look at, but I could always talk to her like I could to another boy." He says: "She always talked to me as if I was grown up.."

[Mr. Hatch: "This is a remarkably correct description of his relations with his mother."

"When you come to know her better," etc. Having now met Mrs. Newlove, I can entirely agree with this.]

136) FEDA: The swings, the place where the swings are, he used to go there and his mother did not like it much. Jolly at this time of the year. Mother will remember.

[Mr. Hatch: "The Fair comes soon to Nelson. Bobbie loved the swings, but his mother did not like him to go on them much."]

137) FEDA: Will you ask her whether she remembers the track I was so interested in, that she did not like, the track where there was some racing? I think something had happened, I think it was rather dangerous, and I know I wanted to go, and I think it must be this time of the year. It was a sort of circular track. It was something I wanted to look at, and I don't think mother liked it.

[Mr. Hatch: "This is good. There was a kind of motorcycle racing at the Fair which he wanted to see, but his mother disapproved. An accident had happened there."]

Proper names are sometimes given easily and correctly, but usually present a difficulty.

An attempt to give the name Catlow Bottoms illustrates this. It was at the end of a description of the neighbourhood in which he had lived that Feda, speaking for Bobbie, said:

140) FEDA: "There is a place 'C' close by, a long name sounding like Catelnow, Castlenow. There seemed to be two or three syllables, like a Ca sound, cattle or castle something."

The family comment was: "The name given is like Catlow, a hamlet near here. Bobbie and I went there the day he was taken ill, the last occasion that he left the house." When studying Bobbie's diary I noticed that almost the very last entry read - "Went to Catlow Bottoms. Sore throat. Went to bed."

Remove two letters from Catelnow and we have Catlow.

Feda can sometimes give a name without difficulty but should there be any hitch, necessitating a second or third try, it is rarely she achieves success. Her explanation is that, even when she hears the name clearly, anxiety to get it voiced affects the medium's brain, causing a tension which hinders expression of the required word.

But often Feda cannot hear the name distinctly.

142) FEDA: Wait a minute, there is a young girl Bobbie is interested in at home, her name begins with an "M", and a boy with the initial "R", and also another one beginning with "E"; they are all special friends of Bobbie's and people his mother has been

thinking of and doing things with just lately.

[Mr. Hatch: "This is exactly correct if you take 'home' to mean the town but not the house."

In conversation they gave me particulars as follows: "M". Marjorie of the rink, several times previously alluded to. "R": a boy Roy whom Bobbie knew at the rink. They had given some of Bobbie's toys to Roy. "E": a youth, Earle, whom Bobbie knew at the rink, aged 19.]

In a recent letter Mr. Hatch had written: "Bobbie used often to cycle in a garden; will you ask him where?" I therefore now put that question.

144) C.D.T.: You often cycled in a garden. Why you did it in the garden I can't think; it wasn't your own garden, was it?

FEDA: Wait a minute, I wonder who it belonged to. Bicycle through a gate, when you got to the gate you could turn to the left down a side path and you could bicycle there if you wanted to.

145) I think there is another boy with him, and I see a tall lady. Is there a clergyman, minister, connected with this place? I don't think he lives there, and yet I get a feeling of clergy and ministers. I see a tall lady and another boy.

[Mr. Hatch: "This is remarkable, as the garden referred to belongs to the family of a minister who died about three years ago. The description is exact, except that there was no other boy."]

When discussing this with the family I learnt that a tall lady" lives there; so that item is also correct. How shall we account for the reference to another boy which does not apply to that garden? Since writing the foregoing I have received the following note in answer to my inquiry.

"'Another boy with him, and I see a tall lady.' We have discovered since you asked us about this that on one occasion only Bobbie wished to take another boy with him into this garden. The owner, however, did not allow him to do so, as she felt, quite naturally, that if she allowed one she might be expected to allow more, and the garden would be overrun. This other boy did not go into the garden, but only to the gate, while Bobbie tried to obtain permission to have him in. On no other occasion did Bobbie bring a boy with him while in that garden, nor did any other boy friend of the family go there. The owner of the garden herself told me this."

In order to make sure that the above account was accurate in every detail it was submitted to the "tall lady" who owns the garden, with the request that she would correct it where necessary. It was returned unaltered and with her signature appended in testimony to its complete agreement with fact.

8) I here abbreviate some further items from Bobbie's messages.

The boy told me of an important engagement which his mother had made for the Saturday afternoon following his death, and said that his being taken ill must have interfered with that engagement.

Mrs. Newlove replied that such an engagement had been fixed for the Saturday after Bobbie's death. It was the Brownies, of which she was an officer, and the boy had known that she was to have spent that afternoon with them. He was taken ill on the previous Sunday. Directly his illness became serious the engagement was postponed; so that Bobbie's death on the Thursday *did in fact prevent her taking the Saturday engagement*, exactly as the message said.

9) Bobbie also stated that some foods that most boys like he always objected to, and that there was one particular food about which he was very difficult, and yet it had been given him only a little while before he passed over. It was, he said, one of his pet aversions, although quite an ordinary food which most boys would have enjoyed.

This statement proved to be correct. The boy had been funny about food. He never touched jam, nor even a cake that had jam in it. He also disliked milk. But his pet aversion was the white of egg. His mother wrote: "Bobbie hated it and always left it, but I was beginning to insist that he should try to eat it."

10) Bobbie also reminded them that he had been interested in going to something like a chemist's shop, not really a shop but a place with bottles and weighing things, instruments and such-like. It was described as "a clean, white place with bottles and measuring things."

Mr. Hatch replied: "This is very good. I had much to do with a laboratory in the town, and Bobbie liked to go there with me. The reference to taps, bottles and weighing things is quite correct."

Many other messages relating to the boy's home and personal interests are omitted lest the reader should weary. Those wishing to see the complete list, together with a full discussion of its evidential value, are referred to *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, December, 1935. The selection already given may suffice to show that the evidence for Bobbie's identity passed far beyond anything attributable to chance coincidence.

Part 2: The Problem of the Pipes

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

The outstanding feature of the Bobbie Newlove records is the story of "The Pipes". For convenience of reference I have gathered together the scattered statements and placed them in order. This is prefaced by an abbreviated outline of the course of events from the first mention of the pipes to their final discovery.

The Problem of the Pipes (Abbreviated outline)

THE STORY opens with a letter of appeal from Mr. Hatch in which he informed me of the recent loss of a boy aged ten. The cause of death was diphtheria. In a further letter the boy's name, Bobbie Newlove, was given. Beyond this, and the address of the boy's home, I knew nothing of the facts which subsequently emerged.

Quite early in this series of sittings with Mrs. Leonard I was told that Bobbie's uncle had passed over two years before and was now with him; later, the name Arthur was added. Mr. Hatch replied to this that the boy's paternal uncle Arthur had died some two years previously. On learning this I thought - and it was an idea which strengthened as the sittings proceeded - that this uncle, with my father and sister, would probably discuss matters with Bobbie and advise him in the choice of suitable memories to give as evidence of his identity.

It may have been owing to their conclusions about the cause of Bobbie's death that my sister Etta took early occasion to say that, although the boy died of diphtheria, there had been something which previously weakened his constitution so that when diphtheria attacked him he could not withstand it. My father subsequently expressed a like opinion, and added that this predisposition might be traced to something which happened *nine weeks before the boy's death*, and he asked my special attention to this fact. I quote one of his sentences verbatim: "If it happened to anyone connected with

you, you would have immediately linked up the two happenings, nine weeks before his passing and his actual passing."

It may be that I saw in this some challenge to my intelligence; for I resolved to discover what was implied in those remarks.

When I asked to be told exactly what it was which the above assertion hinted, the reply came, "Pipes-pipes, he just says this - pipes. That word should be sufficient." This seemed to suggest infection from defective drainage, and I expected that the family would acquiesce in this. But they refused to accept any suggestion of the kind, and replied that they could not trace the matter at all, that the word "pipes" conveyed nothing to them, and that they did not know of any event nine weeks before the boy's death which could in any sense be thought to connect with it.

It was entirely owing to this statement, and to the family's failure to realize what was meant, that I thought it important to discover what and where these pipes might be. Fifteen years' experience with Mrs. Leonard assured me that anything my father said through her would be based on fact.

Persevering effort, the progress of which is described in the following pages, finally brought to light something which the family had not known namely, that in a remote spot, where Bobbie had frequently played during the weeks preceding his death, water issued through pipes from springs in the hillside.

It was eventually ascertained by professional analysis that although the spring water is pure, yet the pools into which it falls are badly contaminated.

It is important to notice that no suggestion of infection from contaminated water had occurred to anyone until it was hinted in these messages; and further, it was entirely due to information given in these trance conversations that we learnt that Bobbie had played by these pools. Six months elapsed before their existence was discovered, and meanwhile the communicators at almost every sitting were giving clue after clue, thus leading us finally to the spot where the pipes and contaminated pools were found.

The whole story centres round the fact that Bobbie and a boy friend had formed themselves into a secret society which they called "the Gang", and in the early summer began to frequent a place called "The Heights" for play and adventure. Being a secret society, they did not divulge the whereabouts of their playing-ground.

We will now trace the indications given in successive sittings which finally enabled us to realize what was meant by "the pipes".

Three months after the first mention of pipes, the family accidentally learnt the general direction of the place where the gang had played; but the area was large and unexplored by the family, and they were without any clue as to why pipes had been mentioned. It was not until my visit on July 1, 1933, that one pipe was discovered there. The second pipe, which justified the use of the plural word, was not found until later.

At the sitting in January, 1933, Bobbie repeated the assertion that his trouble was traceable to the pipes, and when I replied that his people failed to find any connection between his illness and pipes Feda merely remarked that she considered Bobbie a very clear-minded and intelligent boy. I therefore asked the family if they thought it probable that Bobbie might have heard diphtheria spoken of in connection with bad drains. The reply was: "We do not know. It is very unlikely that Bobbie had heard of anyone catching the disease from pipes."

The subject was resumed at a sitting later, in January, 1933, and the further information was then given that the pipes were not in a place to which he went regularly, nor to which he went direct from home, but that he had gone to them when in a second place. Clues to this second place were then given, and included a reference to animals, which

my father asked me to note particularly because, "his people may say when they first read it that Bobbie never went to a place where there were such things. But he did." Among further descriptions of the place was reference to a barn, having one side nearly or entirely open, more like a place of shelter, and containing bundles of straw. Another boy was said to have been there with Bobbie and to have been the reason for Bobbie's going. Although these clues eventually led us to the right spot, they were of no help at this early stage because the family were not familiar with the locality in question.

During a sitting in February, 1933, I expressed a wish that some definite name might be given in order to assist the search. Feda then said that she was being given a name like "Bentley", and then, after some struggles and uncertainty as to the word intended, she pronounced "Stock" and proceeded to describe a town and certain streets. In fact, a route was described and, as I learnt afterwards, quite correctly, which started from Bobbie's home, taking a loop round the railway station nearby, and then going up hill past Bentley Street (in which Bobbie's school was situated) and leading onward towards the old Stocks. The latter stand at the entrance to the Churchyard. Now that we know where the pipes are, it is easy to see that Bobbie's description led us three-quarters of the way to the place. *These descriptions make it perfectly clear that the intelligence giving them was intimately acquainted with Bobbie's home and its surroundings.* I should add here that I knew nothing whatever about it, and that the trance medium was never told that the town in question had become of interest to me. In subsequent sittings additional touches were given which, while they gave us no help at the time, are significant because ultimately found to be correct.

At a sitting in the middle of May, 1933, a further description was given which eventually led us to the place itself - "A place with an address on W ... he went to this W place at certain times." I say it led us eventually to the place itself. It is easy to see this now that one knows the facts, but at the time it only puzzled us.

It was not unnatural that "B" should suggest the Baths, and I inquired whether the family had heard of any infection in connection with pipes at the Baths. This, however, was a false scent, and led to nothing. In the same sitting the actual locality was indicated by the letter "H", but this, like the previous letter "B", failed to convey anything to us at the time.

It is now obvious that "H" meant "the Heights", and "B" the name of Brierfield, the locality in which the Heights are situated.

Guided by the clues given in reply to my inquiries the pipes were finally discovered. Water issued from the ground through iron pipes! It was there that Bobbie had so often played during the weeks preceding his death. Infection from the Water may have caused a condition of blood which weakened the boy's system before the oncoming of diphtheria. Justification for the Communicator's opinion that the boy's death might be attributed to his playing there is found in a statement by the Medical Officer of Health for the district. His letter will be quoted in full.

Let us now take the sittings seriatim.

The Problem of the Pipes

Second Sitting November 18, 1932

FEDA: Did you tell Bobbie's people anything I felt about him here? (Hand touches medium's throat.)

C.D.T.: Yes, that was right, throat trouble, he died from diphtheria.

FEDA: I got it very strongly, that feeling, it is the same one that Gladys had (*i.e.*, Mrs. Leonard, who once had diphtheria). Etta says everything was done for him that could be done, he evidently couldn't be kept here.

C.D.T.: So sad for them.

14) FEDA: Oh, what does she mean? She says he passed over with it. Explain that, Etta, will you? Oh, all right - Etta says, yes, she feels he had diphtheria, but was his heart not strong? Because it seemed to her that it was not just the throat trouble that killed him, it seemed to her there was something which affected his heart apart from the diphtheria.

C.D.T.: I have an idea that the two things sometimes go together.

FEDA: Etta says, I don't think it was quite that. I wonder if he had had something apart from the diphtheria, perhaps before the diphtheria, that had been rather a strain on his heart, weakened his heart in some way, so that the diphtheria was too much for it. Perhaps you can find that out. If it had not been for this condition of heart the diphtheria would not have been too much for him. There was something that weakened his system before; she got a very strong feeling about that.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "Yes, the illness started with tonsilitis, turned to quinsy, and no doubt these weakened the heart."

Apparently Etta meant more than this.]

Third Sitting, December 2, 1932

37) FEDA: Mr. John says he knows he is right about what was said, that the people on earth might have put down about Bobbie's throat and the diphtheria causing his passing, but there was something behind that, and, Mr. John says, he feels certain he is right. There was something behind that condition; he would not have passed over with that condition alone; there was something before that. [See (14) for this earlier reference.]

[Mr. Hatch writes: "We know of nothing except the tonsilitis and quinsy which I have mentioned before."

Note. In later sittings this elusive cause of a predisposition to infection is insisted upon and becomes an intriguing problem. Its final solution was reached during my visit to the house in the summer of 1933, as will be seen when we come to my account of that visit.]

38) FEDA: Will you ask if there is anything they can trace to nine weeks before, something that at the time might not have seemed important? Now, must be careful about this, nine weeks before Bobbie passed over there was something that ought to have been very significant in the face of his passing, something that, in a sense, led up to his passing but not the weakening process that they spoke of before; it was not the something that weakened him, but nine weeks before Bobbie passed over there was something happening, something very significant that had a link with his passing. Well, if it had happened to anyone connected with you, you would have immediately linked up the two happenings - nine weeks before his passing and his actual passing.

C.D.T.: I suppose you could not put in one word what this is?

FEDA: I will see if I can put in a nutshell what I feel about it. Wait a bit, "pipes, pipes"; well, he says just this - "pipes". That word should be sufficient. Leave it like that.

C.D.T.: Was it Bobbie who was telling you about this incident to do with pipes?

FEDA: No, Mr. John. He says, I asked Bobbie a few questions before the sitting that I thought might have a bearing on his earth life, and this was one of them.

[Mr. Hatch writes: "We cannot trace this at all. Nine weeks before his passing I took him to Morecambe for a very short holiday, but nothing of importance happened that I know of. The word 'pipes' conveys nothing to us."]

In subsequent sittings this subject is repeatedly touched upon, and the word "pipes" became our term for it. Not until my visit to Nelson, in June, 1933, did we find any justification for the word. It was then, on learning that Bobbie had kept a diary, that I asked to see it, and at once turned to the date nine weeks before his death in order to discover whether there might be anything relevant to the above. My search was successful. The date, June 16, 1932, contained the statement, "Had two ice creams"; and at June 17 were the words, "joined gang". (See Plate 3). (ISS note: Plate 3 is currently unavailable.) The mention of ice creams suggested possible infection, and the second entry aroused curiosity. Nine weeks before the boy's death on August 12 would be June 10, which is but a few days from the date on which he joined the gang. I inquired what was meant by the "gang", and learnt that it was a secret society formed by Bobbie and one or two of his boy friends; they used to play at having adventures, and chose for the place a spot in the locality which I shall describe when giving an account of my visit to Nelson. It is called The Heights. This spot was decided upon in March and used for play during the summer. The visit to Morecambe, which was for three days at the end of June, would seem to have no bearing on our quest.

Fourth Sitting, January 13, 1933

70) FEDA: Bobbie thinks all the time that there was something that would be wrong with him first, that caused him to take it.

C.D.T.: I don't think his family know of that. FEDA: There was.

C.D.T.: Is that what he thinks now?

FEDA: He does: he had been told there was something in his case which was making it easy not only for him to get it, but not to be able to throw it off when he did get it.

[Mr. Hatch: "His tonsils were unhealthy: this may have caused him to take it."]

FEDA: I don't know what you mean, Bobbie you say you got yours from the pipes.

C.D.T.: That is curious, because my father said that previously, and Bobbie's people can't find any connection with pipes.

FEDA: I think Bobbie is a very clear-minded boy, he seems very intelligent.

[Mr. Hatch replied to this: "We don't know. I think it is very unlikely that Bobbie had heard of anyone catching the disease from pipes."]

Fifth Sitting, January 27, 1933

C.D.T.: Etta, about the "pipes". Bobbie's people still can't trace them. If Bobbie could tell them anything about the pipes it would be very interesting.

80) FEDA: It was not in his home. It was not in a place where he was regularly. There was a place that he went to, not *from* his home, but while he was in a second place he went to a third one, and through these - what he calls pipes - he picked up the condition which was not the cause of the trouble in the first place, but it introduced a destructive element which resulted in diphtheria.

81) FEDA: You know I told you, didn't I, that there had been a wrong physical condition of Bobbie's for some time before, not a good condition at all; but he went somewhere, you see, not straight from his home, to this other place; while he was at the second

place, outside his home, he went to a third place where the pipes were wrong, where he introduced into his system this poisonous condition - where he infected his system.

[Here I must anticipate by giving the interpretation which was only arrived at eight months later than the date of this sitting.

Mr. Hatch wrote me on September 27, 1933, after we had discovered the first pipe: "He would go from the ruined hut, where we believe he played in the Delf, to the pipe which, as you will remember, was quite apart in the open space beyond the Delf." The Delf would be the second place from which he went to the pipes.]

C.D.T.: I wonder where they will be able to trace that place.

FEDA: He is trying to think. I think Bobbie is there. (Hand points.)

C.D.T.: There? Oh, good, perhaps he can tell father.

82) FEDA: He is getting this from him. I get a feeling wherever this place was, of there being animals you call cattle. Mr. John says, make a point of this. I am quite sure of this; yet his people may say when they first read it that he never went to a place where there were such things. But he did. We know we are right in this matter, and that if inquiries are quietly persisted in, it may eventually come to light. Bobbie himself is wishful that this might be so, and two or three friends of his who have passed over are also helping, so that, sooner or later, the matter will be brought to light in what will appear to be an accidental and yet natural manner.

83) Either before or after Bobbie caught it there - we think after - there was something done to apparently improve matters with regard to those "pipes". There was something altered that probably now has improved the condition, made it safer; it was certainly unsafe before.

"A place he went to ... pipes." As I have found it necessary to introduce a reference to our final solution of the "pipes" problem, it may be well to give the complete story here. This was for long a puzzle to the family, as they knew of no place answering to this description. "Cattle ... his people may say ... he never went to a place where there were such things." "Before or after ... there was something done to improve matters with regard to these pipes." "The matter will be brought to light in what will appear to be an accidental and yet natural manner."

Note how the above remarks fall into line with the following facts. On July 1, 1933, I visited "the Heights" in company with the family. First we inspected the lower portions of the ground, and then explored the disused and overgrown quarry, locally termed "the Delf". On leaving this I noticed a shed somewhat higher up the hill and near the road which bounds the area on its topmost side. On nearing this shed the ground showed marks of animals, and hay was visible in the shed. We therefore examined this shed and found that one end of it was used as a stable, and the other end had stores of hay and straw for bedding. One end was open, and this fact excited interest, since one of the clues was "an open end". Indeed, this shed answered in several particulars to descriptions given in the sittings, as also did the surroundings. (All these points will be found in later sittings.) While we stood there a woman approached. I made some remark about the fine view; she responded suitably, and we entered into conversation. With the puzzle of the "pipes" still revolving in my mind, I inquired whether she knew if children came to play in the quarry. She replied that they did, and that they sometimes made mischief, that among other misdeeds they had "broken the pipe". The mention of a pipe in connection with this spot to which Bobbie's descriptions had led us, and which we already knew answered in several ways to those descriptions, inspired hope that we were on the right track. Further inquiries elicited the information that there was a spring part-way down the hill, where water issued from a pipe. She added that they now had the town water laid on, and so were not dependent upon the pipe. I gathered that this alteration had been made some years before.

We then walked down the slope to see the spring. Water issued from the hillside by the side of the displaced pipe, an iron pipe several feet in length. Past this pipe the water trickled down the slope in a small channel of its own making. (See Plate 9.)



Plate 9: The displaced pipe, as we found it.

We had discovered one pipe, and it was in the place to which the clues given in the sittings had led us. We saw no second pipe, and why the word was used in the plural we failed to guess. Our discovery of this pipe was entirely due to the meeting with our informant. It is unlikely that we should have seen the spring and its pipe but for her remark; for we had visited the same locality a few days before and had not suspected its existence. The pipe is inconspicuously placed, and not visible until one goes quite near, being hidden by the formation of the ground.

A letter from Mr. Hatch dated September 27, 1933, says: "Since your visit last June I have been to the Heights several times, and on one occasion I came across water running from another pipe 'm quite another direction from the first one, but nearly as close to the Delf - it was about three minutes' walk from it. This pipe protrudes over a kind of trough filled with water, and is tucked away at the end of a footpath. Mr. Burrows and I made the discovery."

Thus was the term "the pipes" used by the communicators ever since December 2, 1932, found, in the following September, to be justified by the discovery of two pipes situated in the immediate vicinity of the place frequented by Bobbie and his friend.

Having thus glanced at the end of the story, let us continue the January 1933, sitting.

84) FEDA: The animals will be the best clue. He understands from Bobbie - he says Bobbie seems to suggest to him that his parents were not so familiar with this place, or did not go to it to the same extent that he did.

["Animals the best clue." Yes, it was the sight of animal tracks which led us to examine the shed. "Parents not familiar with this place"; they had not seen it. Bobbie once brought his mother to view the Heights from the lower road, but, finding it would be some distance, and the weather being inclement, they returned home.]

85) FEDA: There was another boy mixed up in this, who went to this place and seemed to be the reason for Bobbie going.

["Another boy." Yes, "the gang" comprised Bobbie and his friend Jack, and they had decided upon this place as their field of operations.

A letter dated November 8, 1933, from Mr. Hatch says: "Did I tell you that I questioned Jack about the pipe that we first found on the Heights and he admitted that he and Bobbie played with the water?"]

C.D.T.: I wonder what sort of a place it was, and where?

86) FEDA: Wait a minute, I am getting a feeling of it not being quite a country place.

[This is accurate.]

C.D.T.: I wonder what Bobbie did when he was there?

87) FEDA: They are showing me places like stables now; you know what barns are,

well, like barns and stables. I am getting straw in big bundles, I have got to call it a barn, with one side nearly, or all, open more like a shelter place.

88) I don't seem to be quite in the country, there is so much building round that it hides what country there may be.

The shed is a stable at one end and a store, or small barn, at the other.

"One side nearly, or all, open, more like a shelter Place": an exact description. (See Plate 10.) "Building round hides what country there may be": there are buildings near which hide the view in two directions, yet there is an extensive view over Nelson and the country from the front of the barn. So the description is not strictly correct. One may hazard the guess.



Plate 10: The shed.

however, that Bobbie was giving his recollection of the prospect as seen from within the Delf. From that position one sees nothing of the surrounding country, because the sides of the quarry and the building bound the view all round.

Sitting continued

89) FEDA: I must not say this is anything to do with it, but I hear water running, as if big taps were turned on, and water trickling, as if it is running into a kind of gutter or drain. Like a swilling. they are trying to make me say the word "swilling".

[Mr. Hatch did not understand this, but, assuming that it related in some way to the pipes, replied, "We still cannot trace this matter of the pipes. We will make further inquiries."]

These further inquiries were, however, fruitless.

It was not until three months after this sitting of January 13, i.e., in March, 1933, that the family accidentally learnt the whereabouts of the gang's playground; but only on July 1, 1933, was the mystery solved by our discovering the first of the two pipes. It was then fine weather and the water was only "trickling", but after heavy rains the sound would certainly convey the idea of "swilling", for then the water comes out with a rush. It falls into a pool, which overflows into a kind of gutter which runs down the steep slope of the hill.

Sixth Sitting, February 16, 1933

FEDA: Bobbie says he is very pleased with the result of his messages, but there has been something that rather puzzled him. He was puzzled because they could not make it out.

C.D.T.: Would he like to make it easier for them by giving clues?

FEDA: It was to do with what he calls "the pipes."

C.D.T.: I thought so. That is the most important point of all, and the one that has puzzled them most.

FEDA: He says, I know I am right about it; and did he tell you before that the pipes were not at home?

[Mr. Hatch replied to this: "We are still very puzzled about the references to 'the pipes'."]

C.D.T.: Isn't it a pity, Feda, that we can't get the name of the place?

(Feda's part of the following dialogue is reproduced in her characteristic diction)

96) FEDA: I am getting a funny name, it sounds to Feda like Bentley. This is what he calls a clue to it.

97) Bentley and Stoo, something, Stock, Stop, begins Stoo.

98) FEDA: He is trying to show me - make me feel - a town, not a pretty town, it is full of streets, you know, streets full of ugly people that does not know anything about Feda.

C.D.T.: You mean ugly streets and houses, not people.

FEDA: No, ugly people, not the streets; you see they doesn't know anything about Feda, or about this subject.

C.D.T.: "But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll,
Chill penury repressed their nobler rage,
And froze the genial current of their soul."

FEDA: I should like to learn poetry. I don't think they have got many "spoils" of anything, and they all goes miserable and looking on the ground, and coughing and sneezing and being awful unhappy.

C.D.T.: Did Bobbie tell you this?

FEDA: Yes, and they are going down hill where shops is and houses and they goes down this hill and they come to a cross road; and I think there is a big station there; because there is a bridge just down that turning.

One of the cross roads leads to a dark bridge where trains goes what you say "expectorating" like that, ch-ch-ch- and blowing out sparks and stuff. That is what a lady told me is right "spectorating". And then if you does not turn down to where the trams is you go straight up a hill opposite you, and I see Bobbie going up that hill, and I am following him up it, and he is getting a little bit away from the town part, he is getting more towards houses and less shops and cleaner and less of the poor miserable people. It feels a bit brighter, you see, there. Oh, now I am getting the name again that sounds like Ben or Bentley.

Mr. Hatch's comments are given below. Endosed with them was a rough sketch which I have embodied in the lower part of the one here shown (Plan B). (ISS note: Plan B is currently unavailable.)



Plate 11: Stocks by

account of a barn-like place, with hay, etc."

The solution was reached at a much later date, namely, on July 1, 1933.

The effort for a name, Stoo, Stop, etc., once achieved "Stock". which is almost Stocks. The Stocks are just inside the entrance of the Churchyard previously mentioned.

I have marked the described route by a dotted line in the map. The description seems to start from Bobbie's home and, going down hill, takes left-hand turn to railway station and railway bridge; turning back from the tram lines, which would be reached if one should proceed some yards further, it goes uphill past his home again in the direction of the Church, passing one end of Bentley Street, which Bobbie would specially remember, as his School was there. (Cf. Plan C.) (ISS note: Plan C is currently unavailable.)

Mr. Hatch wrote on March 17, 1933, "First with regard to the route which you have traced on the map: It certainly does agree with the description, and I agree that it seems to reveal an intimate knowledge of the locality. It is somewhat puzzling to understand why this particular route should have been described."

Sixth Sitting continued

99) FEDA: There is somebody there called "Phil", it sounds to Feda like Phil. Will you tell them that the name Phil is a clue?

100) FEDA: There was a boy called Peter who knew this place too. Bobbie is not quite sure whether his real name was Peter, but they called him Peter. And, wait a bit, and another boy whose name sounds like Eric or Alec.

Mr. Hatch, in referring to the above, wrote, "We are trying to trace the names Peter, Alec or Eric, but have not succeeded yet, also Phil."

Bobbie often talked of his school companions, but the names of many of these are not remembered by the family.

In the above-quoted letter of March 17, 1933, Mr. Hatch said:

"With regard to references to the 'pipes' I may say that we seem at last to be on the track of what has been insisted upon so frequently. The references seem to point to a place which had been visited by Bobbie and a boy friend, and by them only. Neither his mother nor I had ever been there. Perhaps I had better not say more at present as some more information may come through. We cannot trace the names of his friends that were given. Do you think it will be possible to get any further information about Bobbie's visits to the place where the 'pipes' were?"

The family tell me that, in view of this possibility, they thought it better not to question Bobbie's friend Jack, but to see if Bobbie could solve the mystery himself.

Eighth Sitting, March 24, 1933

107) FEDA: Etta says I am perfectly certain that they will verify the evidence about the pipes.

C.D.T.: I would like you to give them all the help you can because it would be such a good point.

FEDA: She says, a very good evidential point indeed. And, bearing that in mind, will you write and ask them not to tell you anything they discover until we have given you a little more about it? in case they should write and tell you something that we might be

just waiting to give you.

Ninth Sitting, April 10, 1933

(Early in the sitting came the following dialogue thus:)

C.D.T.: I want to ask about little Bobbie, have they heard anything more about him?

FEDA: Would you like them to get any more about him?

C.D.T.: Well, it was all very interesting, and I think it would be worthwhile getting more. I am eager that his people should find out about these pipes; if I could help them to do that we might finish the case, but we can't really finish the case until they have found out about the pipes.

FEDA: Mr. John thinks they are on the track.

(Later in this sitting the subject was continued thus:)

108) FEDA: Something has just come to Mr. John's mind about Bobbie, he wondered whether he had given it before. Has Bobbie ever said anything at the sittings about a brook or inland water? It seems to be some special piece of water, and he would often go to a place situated close to this water; it almost feels like swampy to Feda.

C.D.T.: That was mentioned once, but not a brook, merely a little place neat a stile where water was. (See No. 45.)

FEDA: No, it is not to do with that either; another place altogether. It is rather important to him, as if he had something rather special there.

Mr. Hatch replied to this, "The reference to a brook or inland water might mean a boating pool which he liked to visit, but the swampy condition is incorrect."

On my visit to Nelson in June, 1933, it was explained that on this boating pool in Thompson's Park Bobbie used to row in the canoes. On July 1st I paid my second visit, during which we found the first of the pipes on Marsden Heights. It was when reconsidering this paragraph 108) after that visit that I noticed how perfectly it applied to the place where we saw water issuing from the pipe. (See Plate 12.) The water made a small pool and swampy area around the spot where it issued from the hill. If this was a reference to the "pipe" place it would be specially relevant in view of my request early in this sitting, and conversation about Bobbie's people being on the track of the place. I incline, therefore, to think that this alludes to the place where "the gang" used to play and where we later discovered the pipe.

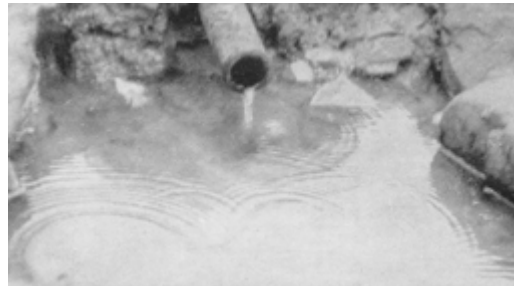


Plate 12: The pool and pipe.

Tenth Sitting, May 19, 1933

115) FEDA: Now, look, he wanted to say that he thought that they were on the track of what he spoke about, the trouble he spoke about, that had a connection with his passing.

C.D.T.: Can you help them any more about it? I have not heard whether they have found it or not.

FEDA: Well, now, he says this, that they were on the right track, but there has been a difficulty, they have been held up in their investigations. Bobbie has been expecting this, and he is not disappointed about it, because he felt it was going to be difficult; he felt there would be obstacles in the way of proving it, or bringing it to light. You see, there are two different bodies of people to contend with. He says they know what I am talking about, two different bodies, and neither of them would make it easy, but one might make it easier than the other.

[Mr. Hatch wrote: "Perhaps we had better leave this till we can talk it over with you; there is a strange confusion with parts very correct.

The mystery might have been already solved by this time, for anything I knew to the contrary; but Bobbie seems to have been aware of the progress of events.

"Two ... to contend with", the family interpret this as meaning that they were divided as to the places meant, which was indeed the fact at the date of this sitting.]

116) FEDA: "Underground", something to do with taking up ground, underground. I don't know what he means, but this is what he says; he can't help them very much more about this just now.

[This is vague, but may possibly have been an endeavour to indicate the spot where we eventually found the pipe and a small stream issuing from the ground.]

117) C.D.T.: Bobbie, I am going there in about a month's time; if I wanted to go to the place where the pipes are, and wished to start from the Railway Station - do you know what I should do? I should walk up the hill past your house; and when past your house and a little uphill, what ought I to do then? Is that the right direction?

FEDA: Yes, and there is another way to it, past the school. He says, I should think past the house and keep straight on.

C.D.T.: Yes, and what am I to look out for? Would the place be on the main road or should I have to turn somewhere?

118) FEDA: It seems to be on the right. I don't think it is very far from the main road; I think it is on it.

[My question was based upon the sketch map sent by Mr. Hatch to illustrate a previous sitting. I aimed to provide Bobbie with a starting point from which he might describe the route to the pipes. It so happened that my suggested route was quite in order, for that is one way to Marsden Heights.

"Another way past the school"; this is correct.

"Turn right"; correct. One goes past the Church some distance and then turns up a short blind road on the right. A gate at its end opens on to the Heights. (Cf. Plan C.)] (ISS note: Plan C is currently unavailable.)

119) FEDA: On that main road he shows me it goes uphill, all the way almost, not just a little bit of a hill. Now for a good distance is it more open on the left than right? You see a main road, and yet I feel spaces. It is not all built on, there are lots of buildings, but lots of spaces as well. He says there are still some spaces. The whole of that main road is rather a mixture. This main road at one time was not much built on, and it has been much built on lately, like a mixture of space and new buildings.

C.D.T.: Then I go on up the hill and what do I come to?

120) FEDA: Is there a place with an address on "B"? He is trying to write it up on a board. The place seemed to be close to a place where he went to. He went to this "B" place at certain times. I had better wait and see.

["Uphill" is correct; "Spaces and buildings" also correct. In Bobbie's time it was still more open on the left-hand side than on the right. "Place 'B'", the Marsden Heights, in which the pipe was found, is in the Brierfield Urban District.

"Went at certain times"; this locality was the chosen play place of "the gang".]

C.D.T.: Don't you mean the Baths, Bobbie? FEDA: He does; it was connected with and mixed up with the baths somehow.

C.D.T.: Is it within the same walls, under the same roof?

121) FEDA: Isn't it a nuisance I can't quite get that? Don't ask him that, I think there is something he is trying to get. I have got to be awful sure about this - the place he would go in the doorway - because it is on the corner of the side road, and I get the feeling that often he would go a bit down the side road to get to the place where he went.

It seems clear now, at this point, I introduced much confusion by assuming that the letter "B" stood for the Baths; for Feda accepted my idea and referred to it as the Baths under the impression that Baths was the correct name.

My second question about being under a roof evidently puzzled and confused, and quite naturally so, if I am right in my surmise that the boy was describing an out-of-door place.

"Doorway at corner of side road"; the gateway into the Heights is at the left corner at the top of the short, blind road. Bobbie would go through it to get to the gang's playing spot near the water pipe in the hill side.

Sitting continued

C.D.T.: I want to ask him if he had been drinking the water at the Baths.

122) FEDA: He knows what he had been told it is. He has been told that this was the cause of it. You know what he would call the baths - I am letting him say what he wants to, because you can see if he is accurate - He says he thinks what he remembers is that a part of this building is not quite the same. You puzzled him a bit asking whether it was near the building, because it was not built at the same time, there was something that had to be built on afterwards. When it was thought to be all complete there was something added to it, quite a good big portion.

"You know what he would call the baths"; here Feda accepts my term for the place in question and alludes to it as "the baths". We must, however, keep in mind the probability that what Feda and I are terming "the Baths" is really the place which Bobbie and my communicators call "the pipes" or "B". Let us see if what follows will apply to the latter place; for it certainly does not apply to the Baths.

"You puzzled him ... something built on afterwards." This addition to a building correctly describes the shed or barn by the Delf: this erection shows clear evidence of having been added to from time to time. It is a home-made structure of wood and corrugated iron put together as need arose. It is quite likely that an observant boy would have noticed these additions.

Sitting continued

123) FEDA: Is there a district there that begins with the letter "H" near the baths, a

longish name? He calls it the district.

C.D.T.: I'll inquire.

124) FEDA: You see, he knew somebody living in the "H" part that used to go to the same place.

[The Marsden Heights were always called by Bobbie "The Heights". Who is meant by "somebody" is uncertain. There are alternative explanations.]

125) FEDA: Look, you have been going up hill, haven't you; suppose you were to go down to the right, like a side way, when you have gone up a hill, you wouldn't go very far to the right before you come to a place that was - there are no cliffs there, are there? - he is trying to make me feel such a peculiar place, it feels to me almost like a drop, a kind of abrupt drop down, not an ordinary hill. And as if there is still some evidence of it being there, but not quite as it was.

The above correctly describes a road to the right, after one has come uphill from Bobbie's house, and a walk by the quarry alluded to in a previous sitting (Cf. Nos. 41-44). "Not quite as it was"; in Bobbie's time a stile separated this walk by the quarry from the side road. The stile has since been removed, and protective railings now separate the path from the abrupt edge of the quarry. The sides of the quarry are like cliffs.

Sitting continued

126) FEDA: And you can get to that place by walking up the hill and turning to the right near the baths; not, perhaps, the best way, but you could get so.

[This short paragraph summarises the foregoing and is perfectly correct if one substitutes "Brierfield Height?" for "the Baths".]

THE PIPES Abbreviations

M: Memory.

O: Opinion or Observation.

R: Right.

G: Good.

F: Fair.

P: Poor.

D: Doubtful.

Sittings

2 Nov. O : R. A previous weakening (14).

3 Dec. O : R. Predisposing cause for Bobbie's illness (37).

O : R. Event nine weeks before the death for which "pipes" will be the clue (38).

4 Jan. O : G. Previous constitutional weakness and further reference to the "pipes" (70).

Sittings

5 Jan

M : R. Pipes not in house, reached via a second place (80).

M : G. Connection between pipes and infection (81).

M : R. Animals there will be clue to pipes (82).

O : D. An alteration has made the pipes less dangerous (83).

M : R. Bobbie's people not familiar with the pipes place (84).

M : R. Another boy went there with Bobbie (85).

M : R. Not quite country where pipes are (86).

M : R. Stables, straw. One side partly open (87).

M : F. View of country hidden by buildings (88).
M : P. Water trickling or swilling (89).

6 Feb

M : R. Bentley is a clue to the pipes place (96).
M : G. and Stock (97).
M : R. A route given in detail (98).
M : D. The name Phil is a clue (99).
M : D. and other boys' names (100).

8 Mar

O : R. Etta certain that the pipes will be discovered (107).

9 Apr

M : F. Brook or inland water to which Bobbie went (108).

10 May

O : F. His people's attitude respecting the pipes problem (115).
M : D. Underground (116).
M : R. Pipes can be reached past the school (117).
M : R. A turning to the right (118).
M : R. Route uphill described (119).
M : R. Place "B" (120).
M : R. Enter at corner of side road (121).
M : F. Building that was added to (122).
M : R. District there is "H" (123).
M : D. Another living there went too (124).
M : R. Route near place with precipitous drop (125).
M : R. Can be reached by alternative route 126).

Result of the above analysis:

| Bobbie's memory | Bobbie's opinion | John's opinion | Etta's opinion |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| R 16 | G 1 | R 2 | R 2 |
| G 2 | F 1 | D 1 | |
| F 3 | | | |
| P 1 | Bobbie succeeds 23. J. & E. succeed 4 | | |
| D 4 | Bobbie fails 5. J & E. fail 1 | | |

BEFORE proceeding to discuss the significance of the foregoing messages it may be convenient to notice in brief summary how the evidence accumulated month by month from November, 1932, to May, 1933.

In November, December and January we find Etta, John, and finally Bobbie himself expressing the opinion that Bobbie's illness could be traced to something connected with pipes. (14, 37, 38, 70.)

An event nine weeks before death will be a clue. 38).

In January my request for further clues brought the information that these pipes were not at the boy's home; that animals would be a guide to their position; that Bobbie's people did not know of the place, but that he went there with another boy. As a further

In February the route leading to these pipes was described in part. (96, 98.)

In March Etta expressed certainty that the pipes would be discovered. 107.)

In May Bobbie gave directions pointing to the exact locality where the pipes were eventually found. (117, 118, 119, 120, 123, 126.)

In July the first of the two pipes was discovered and the second in September.

No maps of Nelson were to be had, either in guide-book or local directory, and it was not until these sittings were over and the pipes found that I inspected Ordnance Survey maps, both the large scale and the small. I found springs indicated, but no mention of pipes.

My knowledge of Nelson was restricted to the fact of its being a manufacturing town, united with others in a valley, and that the surrounding country was hilly. Mrs. Leonard was told nothing whatever about the subject of these sittings, nor did I mention the place to Fedra.

We have seen that the information given about the existence and whereabouts of these Pipes was correct. Let us now consider whether there was justification for the opinion, so confidently expressed, that Bobbie's death might be attributed to the pipes.

The water issuing from the hillside is pure, but it falls into pools, one of which is on the open hillside where it would be visited by wild birds, poultry and animals.

At my request the Brierfield Medical Officer of Health, Dr. J. Strachan Wilson, M.B., C.M., visited the place. He afterwards sent me the following report:

Town Hall, Brierfield,
Lancashire,
February 21, 1934.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 10th instant, re springs on Marsden Heights, to hand.

Mr. Haigh, the Sanitary Inspector, and myself visited the two springs you mention. The water in both pools is obviously liable to contamination from surface water and is not fit for drinking purposes. Any person, child or adult, might develop a low or even an acute infection from the drinking of such water.

We have had samples of the water issuing from the hillside, in both cases, analyzed, and the analysis shows that the water from both sources is suitable for drinking.

Yours faithfully,

J. S. Wilson,
Medical Officer of Health.

That verdict about the pools into which the pipe-water falls is decisive. We are certain that Bobbie frequently played by this water during several weeks; then came an illness which, beginning with tonsillitis, turned to quinsy and then to the diphtheria which overcame him.

The accompanying photograph of the pipe and pool nearest to the Delf shows how

Bobbie's friend, Jack, says that they "played with the water". A boy who was playing with water as it issued from the pipe could scarcely avoid wetting his hands in the contaminated pool below. Those wet hands might easily convey infection to the mouth, either by wiping on handkerchief or by cupping them for a mouthful of water from the pipe. Bobbie lived in a healthy part of Nelson and there were, as I am informed by the local Medical Officers of Health, only two other cases of diphtheria in Nelson at that time, and four in the Brierfield area. (See Plate 12.)

There our definite information ends.

The communicators may or may not have been correct in concluding that Bobbie's death was caused directly or indirectly by his playing with this water. We cannot be certain, nor would the proved truth or error of their opinion affect the evidence that they were in possession of facts on which such a conjecture might reasonably be based. These facts were: the existence and locality of the pipes, the pool into which the water discharged, the frequenting of this place by the boys and their playing with the water. Anyone acquainted with these facts might have suspected that the throat affection which followed was traceable to the contaminated water. *But no one on earth had the least suspicion of this* until it was stated in the course of these sittings.

What makes the incident really remarkable from the evidential point of view is that the members of Bobbie's family were entirely ignorant of the facts, and that the only person acquainted with them, besides Bobbie himself, was his companion Jack certainly a most unpromising and unlikely source of telepathic information on the subject. Yet the existence of this water was asserted and reasserted during a period of six months, and the pipes were finally discovered by our following up the clues given.

Whence, then, came the knowledge so clearly displayed? Was it from minds on earth? Doubtless many persons were aware of those pipes on the Heights; yet it is certain that not one among them ever suspected that I was taking sittings on behalf of Bobbie's family. That fact was private to the few persons in Bobbie's group. The only others who knew, namely, my stenographer, my wife and I, were unaware of the existence of the Heights. No one person knew both facts, viz., that the pipes existed, and that I was inquiring about Bobbie. Whence, then, came the information? It is a problem which I commend to the attention of those who may hesitate to share my conviction that Bobbie Newlove and his friends in the Beyond gave the messages.

Telepathy from minds on earth is regarded by some as an alternative hypothesis to communication from the departed.

There is little to be said for it. We have no record of long and detailed messages being conveyed from one person to another by telepathy. Whether spontaneous or experimental, telepathy is always fragmentary.

Consider our story of the pipes. There were no people on earth who knew the two facts which are so emphatically and continuously interwoven in the sittings, viz. 1: that Bobbie played with the water on the Heights, and 2: that I was trying to get from him messages for his people. These two facts were, however, known to some very acute intelligence somewhere, who made use of them during a period of six months in face of incredulity by Bobbie's people and our failure to understand.

This knowledge about the pipes - which proved to be accurate - could not have come by telepathy from Bobbie's home circle, because no one there was aware of the existence of the pipes. Members of the "gang", on the other hand, would have no idea that Bobbie hurt himself by playing with the water, not of the fact that I was seeking to obtain messages from him.

Critics who wish to apply the telepathic hypothesis to this case will need to assume, without any justification for such an assumption, that thoughts pass between people who have not heard of each other and between whom there is no link save that they

were interested in a person who died. And further, the selection must be assumed to act with unerring discretion, so that no facts are allowed to pass which do not relate to the inquiry in hand. In short, *everything must happen exactly as if* an intelligent supervisor were obtaining information from the deceased for the purposes of the inquiry.

The following letter by Mr. H. Hatch vouches for the accuracy of statements made in this narrative:

Thornton House,
58 Hibson Road,
Nelson, Lancs.

March 11, 1935.

Perhaps some matters in this book will be clearer if I explain my connexion with Bobbie. I am his mother's stepfather, but he lived in my home all his short life. His own father only knew him when a baby and I looked upon Bobbie as my son, and he thought of me as his father.

I ought to say also that I have no connexion with Spiritualism, that I have taken an Honours degree in Science, and that I have spent most of my life in teaching science and in writing text-books.

I am perfectly certain that the evidence proves that knowledge of facts and places was obtained in some abnormal way - how, it is for psychic researchers to say.

Fraud is quite out of the question. As explained in the book, none of the facts, places or people were known to either the sitter or the medium. I was most careful in my letters to make no statements other than comments on evidence already given.

I would direct particular attention to the statement about the photograph of Bobbie with "a board in front" and "a round thing without a peak" on his head (34 and 35). The chances against correct guessing here seem to me to be so high as to make the theory absurd.

Telepathy can only be an explanation if by that vague term one here means the power of the medium to read the subconscious thoughts of people (1) whom she did not know, (2) of whose locality in Britain she had no idea, (3) who did not know when the sittings were in progress, (4) who were actually over 200 miles distant. I suggest that this hypothesis is too far-fetched.

I wish to say that all the statements of fact made by Mr. Drayton Thomas are absolutely true. I shall be glad to answer any questions relating to them.

(Signed) Herbert Hatch.

It may be asked why such importance was attached to so trifling a matter as the pipes. Let it be noted that it was I who brought this topic into prominence by repeatedly demanding further information on the subject. I wished to solve the puzzle because members of the Nelson family were unable to suggest a solution. But for my persistence in questioning we should not have discovered the facts, and so an instructive sidelight on the difficulties of communication would have been missed.

Trifling details may be used for important ends. That is well illustrated in the present case. The clues so confidently given by my Communicators reveal a knowledge, and a conspicuously intelligent use of that knowledge, which cannot logically be attributed to minds at Nelson or anywhere else on earth. They thus provide clear-cut proof of intercourse with those in the *Life Beyond Death*.

The proportion of success in these Bobbie Newlove messages banishes any doubt based upon the possibility of chance coincidence. Fraud or collusion is quite out of the question.

Much of the evidence given was exactly such as we should expect from a little boy; it relates to his treasured possessions, his special interests in the home or elsewhere, his games, the local Gala and the annual Fair with its swings and racing track. It includes correct descriptions of streets and roads around his home, even mentioning the street which must have been specially familiar to him because his school was there.

The replies to questions sent by Bobbie's people show intimate knowledge of the boy's interests both within the house and elsewhere.

In response to my persistent inquiry as to the whereabouts of the pipes, there was given a mass of information which was finally found to be correct, although much of it was entirely unknown to Bobbie's relatives. Above all, there emerged in the course of the sittings *a suggestion which had never occurred to anyone*, and which related to the probable cause of the child's death. Investigations following up the clues given have shown the extreme probability that the communicators were right in their surmise, and that the boy's system was injuriously affected through his playing with contaminated water in a place of which his people knew nothing - and of the existence of which they remained sceptical for a period of six months. This is conclusive evidence that the messages did not emanate from minds on earth; for no one who knew of those pipes had the least suspicion that I was receiving messages relating to Bobbie Newlove, or, indeed, of my existence. On the other hand, I had not the least knowledge of the Marsden Heights or that Bobbie had played at any place where there was contaminated water. My knowledge of Bobbie and his home was limited to what his people wrote in commenting upon each sitting as the records reached them. *I was told nothing which could have enabled me to elaborate the messages* even had I been sufficiently unprincipled to wish to do so.

We have, therefore, a feature which is probably unique in the records of psychical research. It is this surprising expression, definite, emphatic and repeated, of an opinion which had no existence in the thought of any person on earth previous to its emergence at these sittings. No clairvoyant inspection of the Marsden Heights would afford the medium information as to the reason why the boy's illness should have ended fatally; leakage from human minds and the supernormal acquisition of information by the medium's unaided faculty are both ruled out by the circumstances of the case.

Is there any alternative but to recognize the activity of extra-mundane intelligence, one which knew facts which were unknown to the family at Nelson, and which based on those facts a conclusion which is highly probable if not demonstrably correct?

In these sittings we find numerous clearly-expressed and even long and intricate descriptions. This is never achieved telepathically, apart from mediumistic utterance. Telepathy, as we know it from spontaneous occurrence and from experiment, is chiefly *feeling*, rarely a transmission of clear-cut thought. Now we may ask, are the numerous clear-cut and accurate thoughts, which were expressed in the course of these sittings, sent by persons at Nelson or not? If they came from Nelson they would represent a triumph which places them in a class of telepathy about which psychical research knows nothing. But we have seen that the most outstanding feature of these sittings - the pipes problem - did *not* come from people at Nelson. Telepathy from earth was ruled out. Consequently, we may, in my opinion, confidently assume that the information, so copiously and so accurately given, came from Bobbie Newlove's mind and was transmitted to Leonard-Feda. In other words, it was not due to the telepathy which is familiar to psychical research, whether in experiment or observation, but is an instance of information imparted by one who had left the physical body behind at death.

Let the reader turn to section 130 and note the boy's description of his attitude towards his mother. Much of it would be far from true of most boys, yet it is recognized as being

"remarkably correct". Now that I have met Mrs. Newlove I can vouch for its perfect relevancy. Notice, also, that it rings true to the boy's viewpoint, and is not the kind of description which would have been derived from his mother's thought about him. Such a message as this exceeds, in extent and in detail, anything known to have passed from mind to mind on earth by extra-sensory channels. When it is remembered that my only link with the family consisted of letters sent in acknowledgment of my report of sittings, that I knew nothing but what these told me, and that the family were most careful to give me no information likely to lessen the evidential value of subsequent messages - remembering all this, it would be difficult to maintain the supposition that the medium was reading my mind, or tapping the thought of unknown persons two hundred miles distant in an unnamed town.

The most puzzling question connected with the problem of the pipes relates to the difficulty experienced by the communicators in telling what they knew. It is evident that they knew the facts during the six months which elapsed between their first hint and our final discovery. And there is no reason to doubt their wish to make it plain.

Why, then, could not the facts have been stated in one short sentence, such as, "Bobbie played by the pipes where springs issue on the Heights"? That is the question which I asked my father after the mystery had been solved. His reply, which opens up the whole subject of *modus operandi*, was, in substance, this: The difficulty lay in the necessity of fitting in the information, of being able at the opportune moment to fit it upon the medium's brain, either personally or through Fedra. The several parts of any message which we desire to give may be likened to the separate pieces of a puzzle. "I should wish", said he, "to start with that piece which will enable me to proceed methodically, but I may find that I cannot convey it to Fedra, or that she cannot convey it to the medium. So I have to give just whatever happens to fit at the moment. Then, suddenly, while the medium's mental activity is running like a machine, I notice it bringing up something which harmonizes with a different piece of the puzzle, and I hurriedly cast about to find the piece that will fit. Even when the opportune moment comes, I may be further embarrassed by failure to recall my prepared material. Hence it is necessary that I should provide clues, or association-links, with my own material, in order that I may recollect it instantly when it is required. That which I hope to give must harmonize, or associate with, what is uppermost in the medium's brain, or I shall fail to attach it and to fit it in so that it will be taken. All happens in accordance with the laws of association. The brain does not take that which is at the moment unsuited to it. I frequently wish to speak on a particular subject, but cannot. I may try to lead up to my desired topic, but that leading up to it is, in effect, 'padding'. Much of a sitting may consist of that, and while the communicator keeps the brain-machine revolving in the hope that it will bring round something suitable to his purpose, the chances are that the sitter, being unaware of this, grows listless and weary because, although words are being spoken, they do not convey anything that he wishes to hear. Did he fully realize what is going on he might assist in giving us the opportunity for which we are waiting." Finally he added:

"Much depends upon the medium's condition at the time, but the sitter's attitude also exerts its influence: keen interest freed from anxiety is a great assistance, and although we dislike leading questions, yet suitable questions will sometimes help." That was the pith of the reply.

We are, I think, better able to perceive his meaning if we recall the difficulty sometimes felt by ourselves in speaking to others of things we deeply feel. Very sensitive persons become keenly aware of that difficulty: they feel, without realizing how, that it is useless to mention some particular subject, because it would be incompatible with the other person's present state of mind. So we decide to wait a more suitable opportunity lest the seed fall upon ground too stony to receive it. It is the highly sensitive minds which feel this most strongly, and it is, I think, beyond question that the mind of a medium in trance is super-sensitive. I imagine that the mind of the communicator is vastly more so.

When psychology achieves a more complete understanding of the working of the average mind, and shows us the meaning of those puzzling differences which we often notice in ourselves between one time and another, it may help us to fathom the precise difficulties of those who, from life's further side, strive to express their thoughts to us by means of a stranger's brain.

Part 3: Difficulties of Communication

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

READERS WILL have noticed, while reading the attempts of Bobbie and others to make clear their meaning, that there must have been difficulties which prevented them from expressing themselves as simply and as clearly as they would have wished. It is significant also that Feda sometimes speaks of "feeling", while at other times she expresses herself as "seeing" or as "hearing".

The success in giving so much correct information supports the view that the failures, and the frequent vagueness of the messages, were due to Feda's imperfect understanding of what the Communicators tried to say. There must be inevitable difficulties in transmitting through two minds, Feda's and that of the medium.

The following may help us to picture the position.

It is analogous to an astronomer's attempt to inspect a group of sunspots. He directs his telescope towards the sun. He would have wished for a perfectly clear sky, but there are clouds about. This necessitates his awaiting favourable moments when the clouds disperse sufficiently to show the sun. There are cirrus clouds forming a thin curtain at a great height, also some low-lying rain clouds passing.

When the lower clouds draw away the sun shows blurred and ill defined through the cirrus layer. Let this represent those times when the Control is only able to receive the thoughts of the Communicator in a rather hazy form, and not with clear-cut accuracy. On such occasions Feda will express in her own words the received idea, and I do not then get those precise indications of the Communicator's personality and phrasing which I do when Feda can repeat verbatim his very words.

The cirrus layer of cloud represents those obscuring causes which are due to Feda. Then there are the rain clouds to consider, and this represents, in our analogy, the medium's mind. If the rain cloud should be thick the astronomer can do little more than guess the general whereabouts of the sun, the cloud looking rather lighter in that direction; or the cloud may be too dense to permit even that.

On our analogy this would represent the poorest conditions of all, or a very inefficient medium. One then receives little more than the vaguest indication of the Communicator's personality. At other times the medium lets rather more come through; but things are best when the medium's mind neither presents obstacles to the passing of the message nor distorts it in transit. The astronomer rejoices when the rain clouds disperse and leave a clear view of the sun.

If the day should be one of variable weather the astronomer may have to wait long before there comes an interval when neither the lower nor the higher layers of cloud obscure his view. Both layers may have breaks in them, and when these clear spaces coincide the sun is seen to perfection. So, at times, even in an otherwise poor sitting, there may be intervals during which the messages come through accurately.

I must now refer to the sitter, for he also plays a part in bringing success or failure.

Intervals of clear sunshine may be spoilt for our astronomer by smoke from

neighbouring chimneys, or by low-lying mist which the sun does not entirely disperse. This, on our analogy, corresponds with hindrances attributable to the sitter; his state of mind, or his health, can adversely influence conditions, so that an otherwise promising occasion produces but vague and confused results.

So much for causes due to Control, Medium and Sitter. The Communicator has now to be considered. He may find himself hindered from saying what he wishes because, on entering the conditions of the sitting, he no longer has that complete control of memory which is his when residing in his own realm. Parts of what he had prepared to say he cannot now recollect. It is as if the sunspots, which the astronomer wishes to photograph, are turned away from earth by the revolving sun so that they are either invisible or too far from the centre of the disc to be conveniently examined.

Or again, the moon may pass over the sun's face eclipsing it wholly or in part. The sun is there, but is obscured by another heavenly object. This, by analogy, represents occasions when another Communicator wishes to speak through the medium, and his proximity and thoughts confuse the Control, who gets a little from one and a little from the other, so that the result is a mingling of the two. I have sometimes discovered, on analysing notes of a sitting, that what at first appeared to be hopeless confusion was a mixture of messages from two Communicators which the Control had unwittingly combined.

When once a person is satisfied that messages received are actually expressing the mind of a friend in the Beyond it is natural to expect more and better messages on subsequent occasions. This expectation is sometimes realized, but often it is otherwise. Then the disappointed listener asks: "Why does he not say much more and say it much more clearly?" This frequently happens with those who have not the advantage of visiting gifted and highly trained sensitives.

The answer to this question involves a study of the whole method of psychic communication. I have dealt with it in a booklet, *The Mental Phenomena of Spiritualism* (L.S.A. Publications, Ltd., is.) in the section (p. 85) entitled *Difficulties met with by Communicators and Control during Trance Communication*. Here are a few quotations:

"Trance Mediumship is the best method of transmitting messages from the life beyond death. But in its use there are difficulties which impose limits to the success of a sitting. I allude to these in order that prospective sitters may realize that there are reasons for the obscurities and errors which they will certainly notice, and that, knowing the reasons, they may be able to make somewhat more easy that which must always be an intricate task."

The section entitled *How Messages are Conveyed to the Control* contains a description of various difficulties to be overcome, and the next section, *How Messages Pass from the Control to the Sitter*, carries the explanation a step further. The following quotation embodies much which a sitter needs to know. My father said, when speaking directly through the medium and not through the Control:

"It is easier for us to read your mind when away from here than it would be during a sitting. It is supposed by some that a Medium reads the mind of the sitter; but one has only to experiment to discover how difficult it is for us to answer questions. We can sail along, giving details quite unknown to you; but if you suddenly ask a simple question which comes into your mind, it presents a difficulty to us. Now, if we were reading your mind there would not be that difficulty.

During a sitting we are bent on keeping intact the link between ourselves and the control; for if we lost it through giving too much attention to you, it would be difficult to regain. It is as a thread which will stretch a little, but if taken round you as well as the Medium, it would break. A question often breaks the thread of our thought and we have to drop the topic. We can often create another and substitute it for the other quite quickly. We do not mind your asking questions, because we know that, if we do not

take them up, you will understand that there was a reason. But some sitters would feel distressed and disappointed which makes it hard for their communicator. Our feeling of absolute case with you makes it possible for us to do our best. We know you will not be distressed if we cannot do what you ask at some particular moment."

Towards the close of my tenth year of investigation I remarked to my father while he was controlling:

"I have been studying afresh the difficulties of communication, all I have noticed here, and all that you have told me of the processes involved in giving messages. How different is the reality from my ideas of it; for then I pictured you coming as a shining presence and talking with perfect freedom through Feda."

He replied:

"I think it will be a long while before communication becomes as easy as you pictured it. But it should grow easier when we have a more perfect type of Medium and of sitter, people who can attune their mind to the requisite degree."

The booklet concludes with the following remarks:

"In illustrating psychic and mediumistic achievements one must adduce instances in which they were successful. But experience shows how very frequently the results were poor. It may be that the gift is small or insufficiently trained; the physical or mental state of the demonstrator may be unfavourable to success; the sitter is perhaps unsuited to the particular Medium chosen. Again, some portions of a sitting may be excellent, while the remainder is devoid of interest. It is not easy to discover the cause of failure.

"Why are so few psychics or Mediums always at their best? There is much to be said for the hypothesis that psychic activity and mediumship depend for their efficient working upon the presence of a subtle emanation, which forms a field of influence around Medium and sitter. When this emanation is deficient in quantity, or poor in quality, the results suffer.

"Without insisting upon this explanation we repeat that, generally speaking and with brilliant exceptions, psychic and mediumistic faculties are most variable and often unreliable. Psychic science is too young to have discovered much beyond the fact that these faculties exist; it does not know whether, or how, they can be trained to uniform reliability. Since so little is known about the mystery of man's personality, how should the further mystery of its hidden or less observable faculties be made clear? It is encouraging to know that, in every civilized country, there are now groups of students studying psychic science, as well as many others who can give evidence for the reality of their intercourse with departed friends.

"Across the river of death a slender bridge has been already thrown. As yet it is frail and frequently unusable when, at our end, conditions are adverse. But slowly the structure is being strengthened, both at this end and also where our invisible colleagues are working upon it. Not to all men, whether here or there, is it given to realize the imperative necessity for perfecting this bridge between the worlds. The joy of the work rewards its workers, and they know that where they toil to-day, multitudes will hereafter find a highway sufficient for their need.

"In an ardent story Jacob dreamed that messengers were already ascending and descending between earth and the world beyond; for us that dream is realized, for we have spoken with those who came back."

From the foregoing account it will be gathered that, despite its difficulty, communication with departed friends is possible. The means by which this can be accomplished are

not within the reach of every one, but all can learn from the experience of others. This book will, I trust, suffice to give assurance that though friends pass from our sight they have not passed out of existence; that they are continuing elsewhere a life more vivid and alert than was possible on earth: that they feel for us the old affection and are often with us.

My father, speaking through Feda, expressed himself thus:

"I am very hopeful about the future. When men understand the nature of life in the Beyond, the aspect of the country to which they must inevitably go sooner or later, they will make up their mind to prepare for it. That is my belief; if a man understands, he will prepare. He has not understood so far. What has he been taught, save that there is another life? He does not know of what sort, nor what it is like, nor what is going on there. All is so vague that his ideas of it are vague too. We wish to make known what it is really like, and what man has to prepare for. As you know, I was always a great believer in personal responsibility. We need to bring that home to men in a practical and spiritual sense."

Part 4: Criticism and Discussion

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

ON THE publication of this narrative in the *Proceedings* of the Society for Psychical Research I received various questions and criticisms which it may be of interest to put on record here. Others who have similar thoughts may find my replies helpful in forming their own conclusions.

A friend specially interested in psychology wrote:

"Can it be maintained that the facts were not in the knowledge of some living person, such as the little playfellow? Yet I note that 1: such a person could not, under the circumstances, be very well regarded as an active agent for telepathy, 2: there was no reason for that person to select the pipes as an explanation of Bobbie catching diphtheria, and then to present it telepathically to the medium's entranced mind. This incident of the pipes, therefore, is of unusual value to students."

My reply was as follows:

Your question resolves itself into this: was anything given which was not within the knowledge of someone or other? Obviously it is seldom that one is likely to meet with such a situation but something closely akin to it has been achieved occasionally in my newspaper tests as, where I was told that, in a certain spot of *to-morrow's Times* (not yet arranged by the publishers!) would be found an item connecting with such-and-such an incident in my father's life. Few living would know of that incident, and none would know that a relevant name or statement was going to appear in the indicated column on the morrow. *But someone knew*, one who was aware of both facts and who ingeniously wove them into one.

There we find what you need to disprove the *necessity* of the hypothesis you suggest, namely, telepathy from minds on earth.

As to the pipes problem, while Jack of the Gang had doubtless shared Bobbie's memories of the Heights, he had no inkling of the possibility that Bobbie's trouble might be traced to water. Not from his mind, therefore, could the statements have originated which we have found so likely to be the true explanation of the child's death.

It is probably the fact that most of the evidential items given were more or less in the

memory of Bobbie's people. Were it otherwise their selection would have been useless as evidence! The items not within their memory, or Jack's, would include the specifically stated period, which agrees with the formation of the Gang, i.e., nine weeks before the death (38). As no one suspected any connection between the two events, it is extremely unlikely that anyone would have calculated the length of that interval.

See also the unsuspected connection between pipes and infection (38).

In those instances the minds of the persons you suggest as having been possible telepathic agents were neither "open books" to be read supernormally, nor were they playing an active part as agents in "telepathic broadcasting".

The writer continued:

"It is highly remarkable that your father should succeed in conveying, through the medium, elaborate arguments and explanations such as you quote, whereas the messages, odd names and facts of an evidential nature, such as were supplied in a fragmentary fashion by Bobbie Newlove, are comparatively speaking so incoherent. May it not be that the stumbling and rather incoherent mixed up passages, containing evidential matter, represent the genuine communications - whether from living or deceased persons; whereas the facile, logical and more elaborated passages represent the work of the sensitive's own secondary personality or subliminal self? Note, however, that telepathic, clairvoyant, and even spiritistic evidence, might well become included within such facile disquisitions, though in modified and embroidered form."

To the above I answered:

I note your suggestion that evidential facts given with difficulty contrast strongly with the easy flow of general disquisition. Yes, but I think the communicators' explanation the most probable one. They say that evidence requires specific words, whereas the general talk does not, because one can always paraphrase or substitute words. The difficulty with specific words is familiar to us in daily life; we forget the name, the one word, even the idea which struck us while listening to conversation and which we resolved to voice when a pause occurred. I even may forget my dream unless writing it down on waking, or rehearsing it before rising. The unaccustomed condition of Communicators during a sitting is probably favourable to similar forgetting.

Further, I have been impressed by the logic and the keen intelligence revealed in replies to the questions I sometimes ask. This does not emanate from the medium's mind as I know it in her waking life, but from a much more subtle intellect.

In a final letter my friend said:

"Apart from these special scientific doubts and cautions, I find myself in complete agreement with your interpretation of the case and your general comments. I personally find the spiritistic explanation to be the most satisfactory and convincing one in cases of this kind, and your faithful adherence to it is most welcome and consoling. I only venture to raise these doubts and queries from the point of view of *Psychical Research* as a branch of Science and Logic.

"I am perfectly willing and only too glad to accept what you say, from various angles, about the value of the '*pipes*' as evidence for survival. Any other explanation would appear to be curiously roundabout and complex. I am merely endeavouring to leave no stone unturned; for it is only after all possible criticisms and queries have been made that an hypothesis grows to the full stature of an accredited theory. And we cannot, I feel, be too careful in avoiding unconscious personal bias (from which none is free) in the interpretation of results of this sort.

"Personally, I have *ample faith* in these things but one must not let creeds of any sort enter into scientific inquiries and truth-seeking as such, as I am sure you would also

agree. For that reason, I am all the more willing to accept your personal and generalized impression of the case."

Replying to this I wrote:

I quite agree with your position that we should leave "no stone unturned" when forming conclusions about cases like that of Bobbie Newlove. Also that personal bias must be taken into account. Personally I welcome all criticism, and suggested alternative hypotheses, as affording mental exercise of a highly interesting kind. My own bias is, I suppose, derived from or based upon the mass of experience and conclusions gradually formed during many years of personal investigation. When considering fresh cases I have all that in the background of my mind; yet it is, I feel, practicable to consider each case as if it were the very first that one had met with. It is only when alternative and equally balanced conclusions offer, that one falls back upon accumulated impressions.

The most far-fetched criticism of all came from a man who tells me that he has no belief in a Creator or in existence after death. He is consequently at pains to discredit everything which points to messages from those who have terminated life on earth. Faced with this Bobbie Newlove series of verified messages he is reduced to asserting that it all happened by chance! He points out that striking coincidences frequently come about fortuitously and, as he entirely rejects telepathy, he feels obliged to suppose that a series of lucky hits is all that this narrative contains. He confesses, however, that the emergence of the name Bentley is, under the circumstances, very striking, but hazards the supposition that the medium's attention might have been recently attracted by a Bentley car!

A little examination shows how absurd it is to attribute these messages to chance. The walk by the stile (40-46) is described in several connected items; and this linking of so many details greatly reduces the probability of its resulting from chance guessing. Again, the reference to a photograph with boards 34) and cap 35) passes far beyond chance, especially when we notice that the costume had been worn only shortly before the child's death and that he had jotted down a reference to it in his pocket diary.

Especially noteworthy is the knowledge shown of the locality around Bobbie's home, and the road leading to the Heights where he played. If the remarks (96, 97, 98) are compared with the *Plan B*, it will be seen how accurate they were. The same may be said, with even more emphasis, of the boy's further description of a route from his home to the Heights (117, 118, 119, 120, 121), which may be checked by comparison with *Plan C*.

Such accuracy passes very far beyond anything attributable to chance.

A University professor sent the following suggestions:

"You lectured in Nelson ten years ago; and though your memory of the place is now doubtless very vague, I think we must assume that the whole of your experience there, remembered or forgotten, may exist in your subconscious mind as a record possibly accessible to Feda's thought-reading powers. Hence it seems relevant to try to find out how much you saw of the town, whether you stayed a night and if so whereabouts, whether you had a meal and if so where, where was the lecture-room situated, etc. If you can't recall these things, the people who organized your lecture might. I am thinking of your submerged memories both as a possible source of names like 'Bentley', and as a possible *point de repere* or starting point for topographical clairvoyance."

My answer to this was in the following terms:

You ask me to try and recollect all that happened during my visit to Nelson ten years back. My diary shows that I was at Blackpool on March 2nd, 1925, and the next day at Nelson. I recall the journey clearly on account of having spent part of the 3rd at

Blackburn with a man not met before or since. I left him during the afternoon and took train to Burnley, thence travelling to Nelson by tram. My diary records the address at which I stayed the night; it was in Railway Street.

After tea I was taken down the hill into what seemed the centre of the town. The hall was somewhere there. After the lecture I was marched straight uphill again, and so to supper and bed. I left next morning before breakfast, walking direct to the station.

I saw nothing of the town but what might be seen from the tram, or the train, the long street uphill, and the busy central bit of Nelson where the hall was situated.

There was no conversation about the locality. I certainly heard nothing of Bentley Street or of Hibson Road (in which is Bobbie's home). Both these are separated from Railway Street by densely crowded blocks of small dwellings.

Neither my conscious nor subconscious memories contained anything relevant to Bobbie's statements except trams, railway station and hilly locality.

Referring further to the locality, note that it was not until *after* the sitting of February 16th, 1933, in which the name Bentley occurred, that I learnt (from the sketch sent by Mr. Hatch) the whereabouts in Nelson of Bobbie's home, and noticed that it was on the same side of the railway track as the street where I had stayed ten years before. But much topographical information *had been given before I was aware of this*.

My critic further asked:

"Have we any assurance that the medium herself is unacquainted with Nelson? Of course, you couldn't ask her this while the experiment was in progress, and a sceptic would think it little use asking her now that it is published; but possibly you took an opportunity to introduce the inquiry casually in the interval between completion and publication?"

In my reply as to the medium's knowledge of Nelson, I said:

Had this been extensive it could not have affected the messages, since she never had the least clue that Nelson was of interest to me. I casually inquired afterwards if she had visited this and that town, naming several and including Nelson in the list. She said of Nelson, as she says of many others I mention, that she once stayed a night there while touring with a company, but had no opportunity to see the place or surroundings, being all the time fully occupied.

Another critic, finding the emergence of local names difficult to explain away, made the following desperate attempt. He wrote:

"I understand that Mr. Thomas had visited Nelson in some year previous to the sittings. May not the names Bentley Street and Catlow have been casually mentioned in his presence - for instance, by two persons in conversation together within his hearing? Now, if the medium uttered names which sounded in some respect like Bentley and Catlow, it seems not impossible that the dormant subconscious associations in Mr. Thomas's mind might provoke an auditory illusion which would lead him to imagine that the words he heard were Bentley and Catlow. Such illusions are very common among people with normal hearing."

The inference which the above idea is intended to suggest is that the evidential value of those two names is suspect. But what are the facts? Those names were *not taken down by me*, but by the expert stenographer who had, at the date of that sitting accompanied me to these sittings for exactly four years. It was she who set down the names as she heard them pronounced, and they meant no more to her than they did to me.

Determined resolve never to believe in the possibility of intercourse with the departed leads to the rejection of sober and verifiable facts in favour of easy but misleading speculations which lead nowhere.

Another correspondent asked if I had not undervalued the possibilities of mind-reading, and the faculty of certain mediums to avail themselves of the unconsciousness of the sitter as bridge to the thoughts of distant and unknown persons. He suggested that Bobbie's friend Jack might have been the source of telepathic information.

I replied to the above that I was not at all impressed by the hypothesis of mind-reading, especially when applied to cases where the persons, whose minds or memories are supposed to be tapped, are distant and unknown to the medium. One need not deny the possibility, but there is not a single creditably recorded instance known to me where information produced at a sitting was demonstrably derived by that method. Neither have we any instance where a medium's clairvoyant activity can be shown to have obtained information comparable in accuracy and amount to that found in the Newlove case.

There is no evidence that mediums can tap the memory of people at a distance and who are unknown to them.

Such vague hypotheses as the above may appeal to novices as worth some consideration, but I am the more confident in disregarding them as having any bearing upon the Newlove case, because I have repeatedly observed instances where information was given during trance under conditions *which definitely excluded* telepathy from any mind on earth. Some of these instances have been described in my book, *Life Beyond Death with Evidence* (Chaps. xi and xiii), and the following are further examples:

A Place Where Activities Merged

Among the earliest book tests I received through Mrs. Leonard was one of peculiar interest because it so strongly hinted the identity of the Communicator. It brought together facts which were unknown in their entirety to any single mind on earth and included some which were personal to my father and to me. The whereabouts of the book was described with precision. It was further said that on the back of an adjoining volume was a word looking like A-sh-ill-ee. In pronouncing this Feda warned me that she gave the sound as she caught it. On returning home I found that the book standing next to the one indicated had the name Ashley on its back. Feda's A-sh-ill-ee is phonetically quite good for Ashley.

Following several tests from this book, I was told to look near the beginning.

FEDA: One of the opening scenes almost describes a place where you and he have lived together; it is near the start of a chapter and near the beginning of the book.

On page seven was described the house of a doctor facing a village green:

"The little green with its intersecting paths and seats was so quaintly peaceful; and across it on the opposite side were a few old houses, and the red-brick church and schools and the vicarage... It was rather an old-world corner."

My father and I had lived together in but one place boasting a green, and this was Toddington in Bedfordshire. There lived a doctor in an old looking house facing the green. It was quaintly peaceful, as we often remarked. Here and there around it were ancient houses. The church was at one corner, while school and vicarage were a little way beyond the green. It was indeed quite an "old-world corner". The above description is the more remarkable as not a trace of it would apply to any other locality in which my father and I had lived together.

At the sitting next following there was a further reference to this place, but taken from another book, for the finding of which explicit directions were given.

"About a third down the page there is a description, contained in several lines, say four to six for the gist of it, of a place where you and he were together. In that place your activities were merged into one, in a way that was not always possible when he was on the earth; this refers to one of the times when this was possible. You will recognize it by certain circumstances attendant on the time he speaks of, these are literally referred to here."

The following items are extracted from the designated page, occurring more or less a third the way down as stated:

"One walked as it were a little above the country ... wagons crawling over the country roads; one could hear their axles complaining a mile away, coming nearer ... and the people, little clumps ... turning aside to go to their own villages."

All this is perfectly accurate of Toddington as we knew it in 1900-1. My father lived there with me for six months and volunteered to take a considerable share of my work, preaching in the villages, attending meetings and helping in visiting. Only once before had such a sharing of our work been possible, but at Toddington it was much more complete and for a longer period. The description in the above extracts is very characteristic of the neighbourhood. Many of our walks were on high ground with far-reaching views; in the still air of the unfrequented locality carts could be heard, especially towards evening, grinding along the roads a mile or more away; there were one or two villages quite near and a certain amount of coming and going among the villagers.

These two descriptions, so perfectly applicable to a place where my father and I had worked together, could only have been selected by one acquainted with our location and work in those six months of 1900-1; for at no other period of my life would there have been any relevancy thereto.

The former book containing the reference to the village green was one which I had never read; the latter book I had read fifteen years previously, but retained no conscious recollection of the description which proved to fit the Toddington neighbourhood. It is not a case of collusion; for none of the people in our house, except myself, had ever been to Toddington or knew about its green, while no one outside our house would be likely to know the position of these books upon our shelves, even had they divined the relevancy to Toddington of these two descriptions. It cannot be an instance of telepathy from my subconscious mind, since I had not read the book containing the description of the green. The medium had never been to our house.

It is of special interest to remark that there was no reference to the one outstanding subject, charged with intense emotion, connected in my mind with memories of Toddington. When I think of Toddington this it is which invariably overshadows all else. Now that doesn't emerge in the test which it should assuredly do had my subconscious activity been the creator. The finding of these descriptions so highly apposite does not look like chance coincidence; for I have never noticed similarly appropriate references in any of my reading, and it should not be overlooked that the descriptions of the whereabouts of these book passages were quite precise.

Grant that my father was communicating, and that he recollected the place and the circumstances of his work there, then all is explained save the *method* by which the selected passages are observed between the covers of closed books.

Forty Years Before

My notes, posted the same evening and now in the possession of the Society for Psychical Research, show that on February 18th, 1921, at 6.30p.m., I received the following message, which, was to be verified from the *Times* next morning:

"About half-way down column I of the first page is the name of one whom you and your sister knew very well when quite young."

That would take us back more than forty years. How many names would satisfy the conditions of this test? Not many, owing to the fact that coupled with the above came a second portion. Feda prefaced it by remarking that, since many people might say that the presence there of the right name was a mere coincidence, he would add that:

"Close to it is a name indicating the place where we used to see this person."

The chances are now narrowed; in a definite spot has to appear to-morrow a name familiar to my sister and to me more than forty years ago, and close to it, also, must be seen the name of the town where such a person resided.

Stephen Goodwin was one of the chief supporters of our church when my father lived at Leek. I recollect him well, and my sister, although too young at that time, made his acquaintance some years afterwards during visits to that town, and formed a close friendship with his niece.

Mr. Goodwin was especially interesting to me on account of the fine magic-lantern which he occasionally exhibited and which I lost no opportunity of seeing. He owned a silk mill and would personally show us round when we took our visitors to see it. He had sons who attended my school; one of whom was killed while playing near machinery in the mill, and his tragic death made a great impression on my youthful mind; another son helped me operate my own small lantern. In short, Stephen Goodwin was an outstanding figure in my recollections of Leek, as my father would certainly remember.

On looking at the *Times* for the next day, February 19th, 1921, I noticed the name *Goodwin* in large type, and this was within two inches of half-way down the first column, the exact position described. It may have been a mere coincidence, or it may have been noticed by the Communicator, but in a different notice on the line above, and placed immediately over the name Goodwin, was *Stephen*. Thus the name (or names), as well as the position in the column, fit exactly, but the test is enormously strengthened and, as it seems to me, placed beyond any suggestion of chance coincidence, by the presence, only three inches distant, of the name *Leek*.

In this instance it is difficult to imagine how a medium's knowledge of our connection with Leek could play any part in devising such a test. For even on the groundless supposition that she could be aware of our interest in the name Goodwin, can anyone suggest normal means whereby she might know that the name Leek would appear in close proximity with it? The problem is rendered more complicated by the fact that Leek and Goodwin are in *different columns*, although so close together.

This and other tests of a similar character which were successfully verified seem to me to offer irrefutable evidence of super-normal ability to ascertain knowledge of names which are to appear in to-morrow's Press, and, more difficult still, to forecast in what approximate position these names will be found. Were this all, I might be left in some uncertainty as to whether such results might not be accounted for by some unusually high degree of clairvoyant ability in the medium. But any such uncertainty is removed by the consideration that numbers of these tests reveal the intimate knowledge of olden happenings which was possessed by my father, and which he would be aware I should be able to verify, either by my own recollections, my mother's assistance, or his private papers.

Victoria

On January 16, 1920, I was asked to examine the *Daily Telegraph* for the *following day*, and to notice on the first page near the top of the second column, the name of the place where I was born. Feda added:

"Your father says he is not sure if it is given as a place name, but the name is there."

Next day, five lines from the top of that column, was the following advertisement in which "Victoria" might be either a personal or a place name. *Victoria - Send by return. Most anxious second Message.* I had always thought of my birthplace as Taunton, never as Victoria, but recollected having heard the latter name used in connection with Taunton. So I wrote to my mother asking for particulars. She replied that at the time of my birth they were living close by the Wesleyan church of which my father had charge in Taunton, that it was always called Victoria to distinguish it from another church at the further end of the town; and she added finally that his church was situated in Victoria Street, and that the house where I was born was close by in Victoria Terrace. Comparatively few persons now living would remember that I was born at Taunton, fewer still would be aware that I was born at Victoria. Yet this is just the kind of fact which my father could not possibly forget. I may add that this advertisement had not appeared in the *Telegraph* of the previous day.

On August 13th of the same year, 1920, among a number of tests for the next day's *Times*, the following was to be looked for a little way down column 2 of the first page.

"A little lower than the foregoing is the name of one of the first places where they lived after his marriage. Your father likes these tests which go back some time and require thinking out."

Three inches lower than the test which had preceded it, and in the parallel column, was the word "Victoria", the name of the locality in which my father first lived after marriage and also of his church there.

Here we find the same recollection as in the previous case where it was connected with my birthplace.

Ray

The following may serve to illustrate my father's knowledge of and interest in my work.

December 20, 1921. In giving this test, Feda said:

"In the *Times* to-morrow, about half-way down column 1, see the name of a man very recently passed over, about whom you have been talking lately."

I distinctly remember thinking about this particular test while returning to London from the sitting. It was impossible to recall any name which would meet the case. For I had not, to my knowledge, been speaking of any who were recently deceased, nor could I think of any recent death which had especially attracted my notice. My mind was therefore blank as to the name which might appear in this exactly designated position in the morrow's *Times*.

That evening, while taking an appointment at the Mission, I heard of the death of a Mr. Ray, whom I had visited in hospital at his special request. He was a member of the Mission, and I had from time to time discussed his chances of recovery with my colleague, who was his regular visitor. These talks had taken place in our private room and were known only to ourselves. In view of this I concluded that the name of Ray, if found in the given position next day, would be an incontrovertible proof of knowledge

coming from another mind than my own.

When the *Times* arrived next morning it showed the name *Ray* in an advertisement placed less than two inches below the half-way crease in column 1 on the first page!

Scrutiny of the previous day's issue showed that this advertisement had not been there before; the test was right for the day stated, and for no other day would it have been correct.

This incident, together with very many of similar character, indicated that my father was able to follow, with some closeness, my work at the Mission. To some minds this might seem more easy to credit than that he should be able to investigate in the *Times* printing works the preparation for the morrow's edition. Yet, the latter achievement has been demonstrated by scores of accurate newspaper tests. That fact is beyond dispute, although a full understanding of the powers employed is probably beyond the reach of our imagination.

At my next sitting it occurred to me that it would be interesting to ascertain whether my father could transmit the name *Ray* through Fedá; for I was interested in the fact that names so frequently presented a difficulty, and this seemed an opportunity for ascertaining where the difficulty lay. So I asked:

"About the name in the *Times* of one recently passed over and which I found there; can my father recollect it?"

"He can," replied Fedá. I said to her:

"I do not wish to spend time about it if you cannot get it from him easily, but perhaps he can tell you how many letters are in the name."

Fedá then repeated my question and appeared to be watching intently, while counting thus:

"One-two-three. One-two-three-there must be more than three. Nobody has only three letters in their name. One-two-three. One-two-three--"

All this was said very softly, as if not meant for me to hear. I then said:

"Has he given you the number, Fedá?"

She replied: "He does not get beyond three. He keeps sticking at three. One, two, three."

And beyond this Fedá seemed unable to ascertain the communicator's meaning.

I was left with the impression that Fedá felt she had failed to give the answer required, and that she supposed my father was unable to tell her the correct number of letters in the name. Had she been reading my mind it should have been easy for her at least to realize that three was the number of which I was thinking, even if she could not read there the name of *Ray*.

Such instances as the foregoing demonstrate that neither my own mind nor the minds of other persons could have supplied the information so ingeniously put together for the purpose of these experiments. *Their avowed purpose was to show that telepathy from human minds was not the origin of these messages.*

Readers may wish to know whether Bobbie Newlove has said anything of his present life and surroundings, of his occupations and outlook. He has; but instead of including such material, which in the nature of things is not capable of present verification, it

seemed better to restrict this book to statements which could be checked and weighed. Bobbie's account of his doings is in substantial agreement with descriptions given to others and which I have published in my booklet *Beyond Life's Sunset* (Lectures Universal Ltd., 161, Cheapside, London, E.C.2). A further collection of experiences is being issued by the same publishers early in 1937, under title, *Dawn in the Beyond*.

Numbers of correspondents write asking me to do for them what I did for the applicants at Nelson. Much as I should have wished to accede to these requests, their number makes it impossible. I therefore respectfully ask that, instead of writing to me, appeals should be sent to one or other of the Societies listed below. Their Secretaries will willingly suggest the best means at disposal, and give information by which those who wish to do so can take sittings personally with reputable and experienced sensitives.

Appendix: Psychometry

- Charles Drayton Thomas -

PSYCHOMETRY HAS been defined thus: "The faculty of reading the characters and surroundings of persons, by holding in the hand small objects which they have had in their possession." The gifted psychometrist, taking the object in his hand, presently begins to *feel* this or that relating to the history of the object or to its owner. We can but conjecture what it is in the object used which causes this feeling, but it is this kind of *feel* or *sensing* which forms the basis of all mental-psychical phenomena.

Just as our five physical senses can be traced to modifications and variations in feeling, so can the various forms of mental impression be resolved into *feeling*. When the feeling is faint the psychic "has an impression" of this or that, an idea forms in his mind. When the feeling is more intense it may emerge into consciousness as a kind of inward sight. But what do we mean when speaking of a feeling emerging into consciousness? Where was it felt before it reached one's consciousness?

In order to answer this question we must introduce the reader to the Subliminal Mind, that elusive area wherein all forgotten memories are stored, and where there takes place much of which he is never conscious, but which, nevertheless, influences health and happiness every hour of his life. It is sometimes termed "Subconscious mind," and is the area of our unconscious mental activity.

Up to the present time its powers have not been satisfactorily defined; we know that it does much, but the limits of its operation have not been ascertained. It is apparently the sender and receiver of thought in telepathy. It supervises the activities of our involuntary physical operations, it also affects our dreams. The mind, as we know it, is but a small part of our real and complete mind; we know mind only by its activities within consciousness, but its activities beyond the narrow range of consciousness are many and varied.

To those unacquainted with the works of recent authors on this subject, it may be confusing to learn of this mysterious Subliminal Mind. We will, therefore, venture upon a theory which is probably true to fact, and which also helps us to form a picture of the mind's twofold sphere of action. It is this: in addition to his physical body, man has one which is more or less a duplicate, but formed of so ethereal a substance as to be invisible. The two bodies interpenetrate. Man has, thus, a physical brain and an ethereal brain. When we think consciously we are using the physical brain; but when we use the ethereal brain alone, our waking consciousness, just because it is limited to the physical brain, is unaware of the result.

It would, of course, be easy to picture this hypothesis so grotesquely that the sane mind must reject it. Quite otherwise is it when one considers how modern theories have pushed the formation of matter far into the invisible. Each cell of one's body is an

interweaving of invisible atoms, each of which may be likened to a solar system in miniature. The cells are guided to their respective positions by "a directive idea" which thus builds up the body. It scarcely needs saying that this directive idea is a puzzle to physiologists because it is invisible and elusive. We may surmise that ultimately it will be found that this directive idea works through an intermediary, and that the intermediary is none other than the hypothetical invisible body. This discovery would not solve the mystery, but would take us one step nearer its solution.

We may, therefore, think of the physical body as being formed upon the invisible body which is at once its pattern and its builder. The pattern persists when the material counterpart decays in death.

In this connection the following remarks by the late Dr. Geley are of interest: "This subconscious psychic activity, powerful in itself, is reinforced by a still more potent and infallible memory which leaves the feeble and limited conscious memory far behind." "Everything happens as though the psychic state which we call a remembrance, registered by the cerebral cells - ephemeral as they are and destined soon to disappear with them - were at the same time registered in 'a something' permanent, of which this remembrance will henceforth be an integral and permanent part." "It is not conditioned by the organism; on the contrary, everything happens as though the organism and the cerebral functions were conditioned by it." (*From The Unconscious to the Conscious*, pp. 123, 127, 136)

Our mind is much more than the brain it uses. Mind is an activity of the soul or self. When using the physical brain it is limited, and cannot accomplish all it desires. It had more scope when using its ethereal brain, but has difficulty in bringing back information about its activities there and impressing this upon the physical brain. In other words, we are able to reveal ourselves to our waking consciousness only partially. We know more when using the invisible brain than we can recall when consciously trying with the physical brain; hence the puzzling facts of memory and forgetfulness. The storehouse of memory is in the ethereal brain, that is to say, in the subliminal areas of our mind. The conscious area holds but few memories at any one moment, we cannot think of many things at once; it is like the office in which important business is transacted while the warehouse is elsewhere. People differ greatly in ability to obtain access to the stores of the subliminal area.

Let us now apply this to mental psychical phenomena. It is mind acting in the etheric brain which produces that "feeling" by which psychometrists can learn surprising facts, such as could not have been obtained from the psychometrised object consciously. It is mind acting in the etheric brain which observes clairvoyantly and hears clairaudiently.

It is also mind acting in the etheric brain which receives and interprets those impressions which result in thought-transmission from people at a distance.

In short, the etheric brain may be thought of as Nature's Radio receiver and Television apparatus. It is used by gifted psychics to transform and make intelligible the subtle fields of influence which we speak of as Psychometry or Sensing, Clairvoyance, Clairaudience and Telepathy.

If the reader will substitute the term Subconscious or Subliminal for Ethereal Brain, he will follow without much difficulty the explanations put forward.

We may now return to the subject of Psychometry. We have spoken of it as a feeling which emerges into consciousness. If we now ask, Where was that feeling before it emerged? the reply is that it was an impression on the etheric brain. The difference between a gifted psychic and other men is chiefly that the psychic can, to some degree, extend the area of his consciousness, so that a part of it is directed to the etheric brain, instead of being wholly directed upon the physical brain.

The basis of psychic sensitivity is ability to make contact with the subconscious areas

of mental action. How mental action transforms what the etheric brain feels, and so reproduces it as an interior sight and sound, we no more understand than we can understand how the physical brain enables us to enjoy seeing and hearing, when its nerves bring to it from eye and ear the vibrations of ether and air.

Psychometry, then, is the interpretation of a special kind of subliminal feeling, a feeling which conveys information. That feeling results when an object is handled, but it may be even stronger when, instead of handling an article which has been worn by some person, that person's hand is held. People can be psychometrised and information obtained by this method about their character and past life.

The above note on Psychometry is taken from the author's book, *The Mental Phenomena of Spiritualism*, published by the London Spiritualist Association, 16 Queensberry Place, London, S.W.7. Further information on the same subject will be found in that book on pages 29, 33, 48-51, 74-85.