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HEN A SCIENTIFIC friend once asked the late Professor James what he hoped to accomplish by his persistent delving into occult phenomena, his instant reply was: "To find balm for men's souls." And

undoubtedly this answer summed up with incisive vividness the chief motive that, from the days of the early eighties when organized psychical research came into being, has led scientists of such pre-eminent standing as Professor James, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes and Cesare Lombroso, to disregard the sneering criticisms of their colleagues and to adventure into the bewildering realm of the weird and the uncanny. One and all, they hoped to gain scientifically acceptable evidence validating the traditional belief of mankind in a life beyond the grave.

But there was another motive prompting them to undertake their ridicule-provoking task. This was their realization that the progress of knowledge has always depended on the degree of attention paid to the "unclassified residua" of the facts of experience, and that the obstinate refusal of the scientific world in general to pay any attention whatever to unclassified residua like hauntings, apparitions, premonitions and mediumistic communications, quite possibly involved serious gaps in a full understanding of the nature of man here on earth. "Is science a completed book?" these open-minded thinkers asked. "Do we know everything that is to be known concerning ourselves and the universe in which we live? Or is it not our duty to seek to win a larger knowledge by whatsoever means are available to us, and no matter how laborious or distasteful the work of investigation may be?" In this belief, and from this point of view, William James and his fellow psychical researchers attacked the mysteries of spiritism.

The result has been to justify abundantly their courage and their confidence. If the actuality of the soul's survival still baffles scientific demonstration, the effort to demonstrate it has most assuredly enriched our knowledge of the human mind, and has brought to light facts not only of an astonishing character but of immense significance to the interests and needs of everyday life. So true is this that today, especially in the fields of medicine and education, practical application is being made of novel principles and methods, the discovery of which has been directly or indirectly due to psychical research.

TAKE the now well-established psychological law of "subconscious mentation"—the law which affirms that all of us constantly perceive and remember far more than we appreciate, and that these subconscious perceptions and memories often exercise a controlling influence over our conscious thoughts and behavior. Out of the discovery of this vital truth has resulted on the one hand a complete explanation on a naturalistic basis of many phenomena formerly reputed to be supernatural, and on the other hand recognition of the tremendous rôle played by subconscious ideas in affecting one's character and career, and even at times in affecting bodily health. There can not be the slightest question that psychical research first put science in earnest on the trail of the subconscious, and that to it must be credited much of the strongest evidence substantiating this hitherto unsuspected phase of the mental life of man.

Even before the Society for Psychical Research was organized in 1882, its chief founders—Professor Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, and Edmund Gurney

—from their personal observations were inclined to the belief that memory was a vastly more complicated, extensive, and retentive process than was then commonly supposed. That this was the case Gurney in particular demonstrated, soon after the organization of the society, by carrying out an elaborate series of experiments that constituted the first really psychological investigation ever made of the strange phenomena of hypnotism. He discovered, among much else, that although persons, on being brought back to their normal waking state, had no conscious recollection of what had transpired while they were hypnotized, they nevertheless did somehow possess a true memory of the things said to them during hypnosis; as was proved by the fact that, if ordered to perform a certain act, or acts, at a specified time after they had been dehypnotized, they would faithfully execute the command, albeit without being able to give any reason for doing so, and often without being aware that they had done so.

More than this, Gurney found to his astonishment that it often was possible to detect in the waking state the presence and operation of the submerged hypnotic memories by means of "automatic writing." That is to say, if the "subject," after being brought out of hypnosis, were given pencil and paper, and a screen held between his face and his hand so that

he could not see the paper, he would write, without being conscious of what he was doing, sentences referring to the statements made to him while hypnotized. That he really was not conscious of the words his hand formed, was evidenced by his invariable inability, despite the offer of substantial sums of money, to tell what he had written. Equally astonishing was the discovery made by another investigator, Mr. Myers, that some "subjects," if told after they had been dehypnotized to gaze into

a crystal or other body with a reflecting surface, would see in it hallucinatory pictures representing the ideas conveyed to them during hypnosis.

To illustrate, Mr. Myers once hypnotized a young man, a simple working-lad, and narrated to him the story of the appearance of Banquo's ghost at Macbeth's feast. After he had been awakened, the offer of a liberal reward failed as usual to elicit from him any account of what he had just been told. He was then ordered to look into a glass of water. Only a few minutes elapsed before he exclaimed:

"I SEE two or three men standing—some sitting—one in a chair on a raised place, like where the head man sits. That's the mayor, I suppose."

A pause—then, with a loud whistle: "Here comes the bogey man. Look at that chap in the corner. Isn't he frightened of him! And the mayor's quite upset."

Another pause. "Why, it's a ghost! Look at him! They all stick their swords through him. It doesn't hurt him. He's a ghost!"

Many similar experiments by Mr. Myers were fully as successful, and in no instance did the "subject" realize that the pictures he saw in the glass of water were representative of information given to him

while hypnotized.

Now, the phenomena of automatic writing and crystal gazing had up to that time been regarded as absolutely inexplicable on other than a supernatural ground. The question at once arose in the minds of Gurney, Myers, and other psychical researchers: Can it be that "sensitives" who write trance messages or see crystal visions merely draw on forgotten reminiscences for the contents of their messages or visions? Investigations set on foot as soon as this question was raised, and continuing to the present day, have left no doubt that, to a large extent at any rate, it must be answered in the affirmative. They have, indeed, proved beyond contradiction that every human being carries within him memories that have totally faded from conscious recollection but may be recalled under certain conditions, and that such memories not infrequently relate to matters of which he never had conscious knowledge but which it can be demonstrated once proved part of his actual experience.

Perhaps the most remarkable instance on record (Continued on Page 9)

