

DR. HYSLOP TELLS OF EXPERIMENTS WITH FAMOUS MEDIUMS

DR. JAMES H. HYSLOP, Secretary and active head of the American Society for Psychical Research, has just completed the fourth volume of the "Proceedings" of the society. It will make a rather large book of some 387 pages. It is made up chiefly of a record and discussion of mediumistic experiments, and these consist for the most part of the trance phenomena exhibited by Mrs. Piper.

There are recorded also some experiments with Mrs. Chenoweth, as well as a few experiments with two other women not known to the public as mediums.

Besides these there is a profound and ultra-spiritistic analysis and discussion of the spiritualistic hypothesis. The writer concludes with a few sharp words to critics and skeptics. He says that he does not expect to convert, and is not making any effort to convince those who will not take the trouble to examine patiently and intelligently the facts which he has collected.

This is his second report on the Piper case. Take it all in all, Dr. Hyslop assumes a more decided position in favor of the spiritualistic hypothesis in this volume than in any of his previous works.

At the outset the writer announces that since his former report was published he has discovered that two of three incidents which he had taken to be true or false or unverifiable have since then found a probable interpretation.

One of these is an incident which he had referred to before as the incident of "the broken wheel." His father communicating from the spirit land by means of a medium, he had mentioned that he (his father) and his (Dr. Hyslop's) aunt, Eliza, had been in an accident in which the wheel of a wagon was broken.

When Dr. Hyslop asked his aunt about this accident she denied that it had taken place. Therefore, he discarded the communication as of no value.

Now he declares the incident turns out to be one which occurred the day after his father's death, and involved Dr. Hyslop and his uncle. This uncle has since died, and Dr. Hyslop declares, the latter, in communicating from the spirit world, has used the incident to prove his identity to his wife, Dr. Hyslop's aunt.

The incident will be related in detail later, to illustrate the sort of communication the investigator gets from the medium. Dr. Hyslop regards it as a most remarkable incident and commends it to the careful study of the critical reader.

The writer refers to the medium's theories advanced by the world in general to account for these "communications." They are: Fraud, suggestion, secondary personality, telepathy combined with secondary personality, and spirits.

In this report he excludes both fraud and suggestion for reasons which he dwells upon at length. He introduces seven hypotheses as a basis for the phenomena observed in the Piper case, but as he discards the first five the reader may as well do likewise and consider only the sixth and seventh so as to arrive at a better understanding of Dr. Hyslop's attitude toward the phenomena.

Here they are:

(6) We may suppose the knowledge to have been supernaturally acquired during the trance, and to have been communicated in a spiritualistic form without any consciousness of its real origin. I do not decide whether the supposed supernormal acquisition shall be called telepathy or not, but it would involve a process quite related to it and would also involve the combination of secondary personality with it, if not in its data, certainly in the manner of delivering the information.

(7) We may suppose the supernormal acquisition of the information from disincarnate spirits and the communication of it to the receiver with or without consciousness, in this case without it, and whether we assume an accompaniment of secondary personality or not. We may assume or disregard telepathy as a part of the process.

"The real choice for the scientific mind," the writer continues, "must be between the sixth and seventh hypotheses. Those who do not accept the combination of telepathy and secondary personality extending the term 'telepathy' to meet the exigencies of the problem, have no rational alternative to the spiritualistic unless they resort to the first, (hypothesis) that of conscious fraud and then accept the responsibility of applying it in detail to both the evidential and non-evidential phenomena.

"To me the real alternatives are precisely fraud and spirits, with the conviction that conscious fraud is quite as fully excluded from the account as any of the more preposterous suppositions, unless the conspiracy and collusion of many others be admitted into the case. I do not see any better reasons for admitting this than I do for asserting fraudulent collusion in all other scientific work."

Inasmuch as Dr. Hyslop remarked at the outset that he disregarded fraud entirely in this report, we should note the above statement that he is committed irrevocably to the spiritualistic hypothesis. That being the case, we will proceed to the incident of "the broken wheel," in order to afford a fair example of what he considers to be evidential phenomena.

It should be explained first, however, that the communication is made by means of the so-called automatic writing, Mrs. Piper being the medium. The matter which is not contained in brackets is that of the automatic writing. That is parenthetical represents what was said or asked by Dr. Hyslop. Here is the colloquy between Dr. Hyslop and what he believes to be the spirit of his uncle, Dr. Hyslop beginning, diverting the communications by a question:

(I think the walks were with Aunt Eliza. You and I took something else together, you remember, just after father passed out.)

You are thinking of that ride. Guess I do not forget it. I think I do not. My head is troublesome in thinking. I hope to be clearer soon.

(Very good. You can tell me what happened in that ride when you can make it clear.)

I will gladly. Do you remember a Stone we put together?

Supposed intervention by another spirit known to Dr. Hyslop as "Rector": "Not quite right, friend. Let him repeat. I'll see you again, my boy."

Here follows an explanation by Dr. Hyslop:

The next day after my father's death we had to take a ride into the country on an urgent mission for a friend, and an accident happened which is indicated in later communications. But the sequel

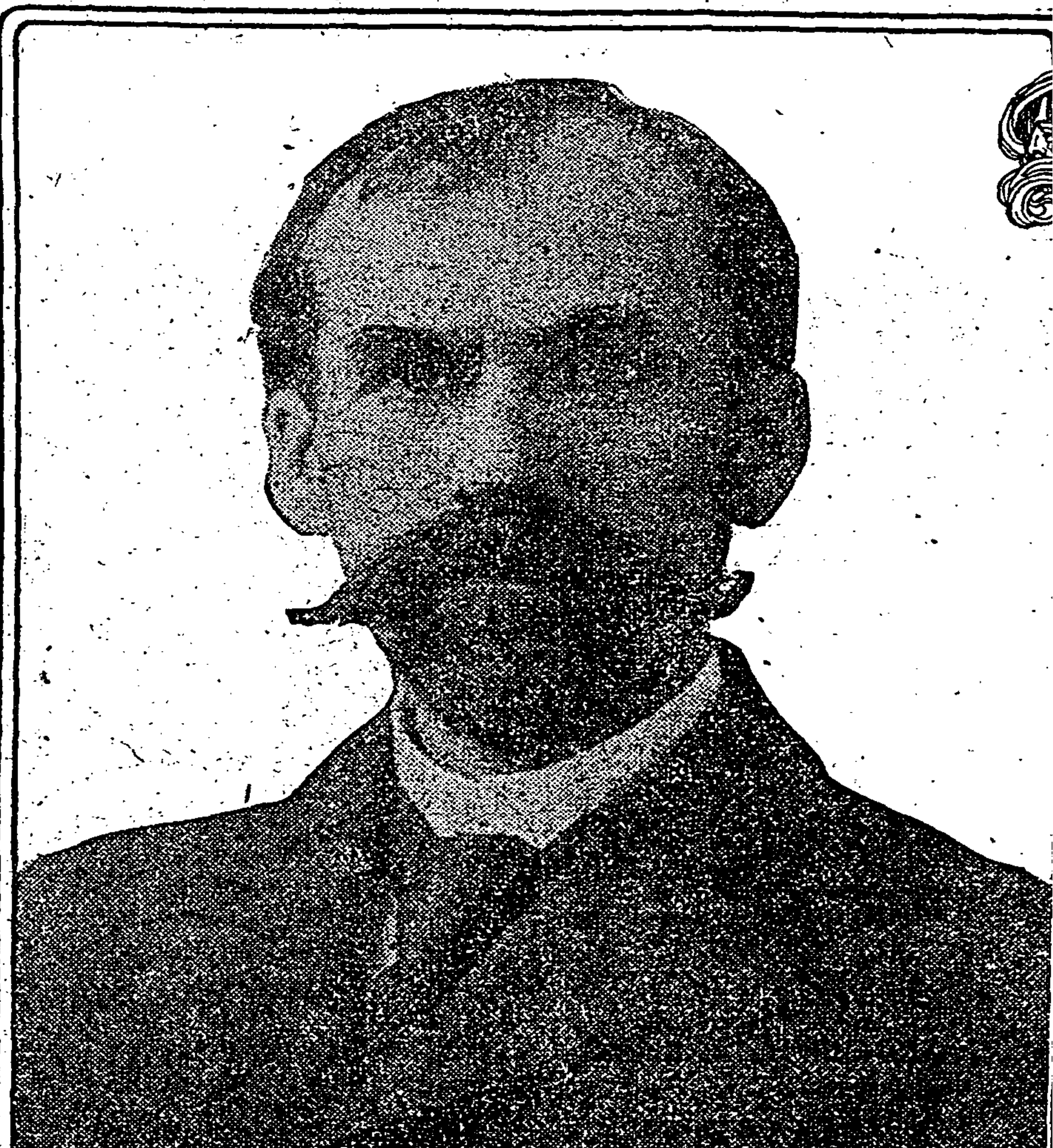


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said and we tied up. I took my knife and made a hole and we tied the harness up with a bit of it. We tied up the harness with a bit of rope. Remember the shaft was lowered. We tied it up with a bit of string, yes, a part of the harness. We made a hole, remember, and hitched it together with a part of it which sufficed as string. Oh, I am your uncle all right.

(All right, uncle. I agree, uncle.)

I remember that ride well, and I remember dark . . . getting late, and we did not get back until late, dark. (Yes, that is right, uncle.)



the difficulty of concentration. The supposed spirit of Dr. Hodgson expressed it in this way:

"It is as though you were trying to learn to ride a bicycle, and you were going along on it, and somebody came up and tried to tell you about a game of marbles you played when you were a boy."

This would mean, presumably, that when a spirit was trying to communicate, or trying to learn to communicate, other spirits interfered—"batted in," to use a forceful slang phrase.

As evidence of this difficulty here are a few brief extracts from Dr. Hyslop's discussion of theories as to the methods of communication between the spiritualistic and materialistic worlds. Space will not permit of a more extended review of the subject.

"Now when we know the enormous difficulties associated with the 'communication' of ideas normally and that it requires a long evolutionary process of education to effect it, we may well imagine the obstacles to a more direct process," says the writer. "We have found it impossible to transmit thoughts normally and that only a laboriously constructed process of artificial symbols ever enables us to establish intellectual relations between minds at all. What we suppose to be an easy and natural means of ascertaining each other's thoughts is an exceedingly difficult one, in fact, as indicated, impossible, and only long ages of evolution have brought about a delicate conventional relation between minds. It is much more difficult than the mere direct means of communication involved in telepathy!"

"Now, where a disincarnate spirit comes to communicate with the living he has to do it either through organic or inorganic matter. The phenomena of communication by means of inorganic represent the physical type, and aside from the essential question of their validity or reality are extremely rare, and present more obstacles to their attainment than perhaps any other type.

"Communication through organic agencies represent the various forms of mediumship and involve some sort of influence upon the living organism more or less similar to the action of one's own consciousness upon his body when living. But the attempt to control or possess an organism not our own is complicated with the question of habits which we have not developed in that organism, and the problem of displacing the connection of another soul with its own body.

"Possibly the subliminal or subconscious functions of the mind point to this view. We know Mr. Myers advanced the hypothesis that as the subliminal functions of the mind show no useful purpose in the struggle for existence they seemed to imply another order of reality toward which we are moving. If we may treat the subconscious as the latent powers of the mind, waiting for the rebirth into a higher life, which death may be, analogous to the sense of habits which we have not developed in that organism, we have not developed in that organism, and the problem of displacing the connection of another soul with its own body.

"Often we get evidence that two or more disincarnate spirits are necessary to produce the desired effect, and as often the person who seems to be the agent in effecting the result is not the one concerned at all. The real agent remains unknown or rarely manifest. If then the agents in the transcendental world have to employ the subliminal functions of the living medium—and these may be called the spiritual senses—for effecting their purposes, we may imagine that the process of communication might be a reproduction of our own methods of acquiring knowledge, only in forms that do not appeal to our grosser senses. The difficulties then would be caused largely by the want of adjustment between spiritual and physical senses, the alternative terms for subliminal and supraliminal functions."

Dr. Hyslop holds that physical science with its ether, ions, and electrons, has proved the existence of a transcendental world, and that normally we are more or less insulated from that transcendental world. He then supposes for argument's sake that insulation may be partially suspended in hysterical or other conditions, so that the soul is partly released from its "cohesive" existence with the body. Then, he reasons, we might have a condition in which telepathic communication might occur between the living without the intervention of foreign agencies. The condition of the medium, he argues, may be one of partial release of the soul from the body and it (the soul) may become rapport with disincarnate spirits.

Possibly, he argues, the soul of the medium is entirely released from the body to effect communication with the disincarnate.

"That is," he continues, "the communication between a spiritual and a material world may require such a connection between soul and body as will involve rapport with the spiritual on the one hand and the use of automatic functions of the organism on the other, or rapport with the physical. The great chasm to be bridged is that between subliminal and supraliminal functions, which is possibly widened by the removal of the normal insulation of the soul, or the suspension of its usual control of the organism. It should be apparent from this conception that interfusion of disincarnate and incarnate influences would most naturally occur, and, so far as it is assumed or made evident by the facts, it implies so much in favor of the co-operative action of the transcendental and material in the phenomena which we have to explain."

Here is what Dr. Hyslop has to say to his critics:

"In this conclusion, however, I must emphasize one fact where it is most likely to be observed. It is that I must not be held responsible for the failure to convince the critic or skeptic. That is his affair, not mine.

"The indolent class that simply sits in its library and indulges in learned imagination is not to be feared or respected. It can write magazine articles and pamper respectable orthodoxy, scientific and otherwise, or feel safe in the employment of ridicule, but if never adds to human knowledge. My obligations do not extend to this class. If it desires to be convinced its business is investigation, not cavilling.

"The duty of the scientific man is to collect facts and to try rational explanations. If they convince any one his work may not have been in vain. If they do not convince others, their not-to-blame-

The Late Dr. Richard Hodgson.

shows that my uncle in mentioning a ride had in mind a different one, as the clearing up of the confused reference to 'Storm,' read also 'Stone' at the time, will show.

"On the next (at a sitting) he started in evident confusion, but cleared up in a little while. He first said that he 'came to rest Mamie,' my wife, following her communications and those of my father. He then attempted his name, though it had been correctly given the day before as Mrs. Piper came out of the trance. He said: 'Do you remember Car bes . . . Uncle Car . . . Ieths,' and Rector added: 'Friend, I do not believe I can speak this properly. He will give me no peace till I give his message.' My uncle then went on to tell me that he had given me some books when I was in college and that I had one time gone in swimming and caught cold from it. I do not remember either of these events. 'The former is not at all probable, and the latter is very probable, but worthless. I then pressed the question that I had asked the day previous."

(I do not recall it, but please tell me something about that ride just after father passed out.)

Your father told you before, but had it on his mind, Eliza.

(If father told me I did not get the message. If you can tell it, please do so.)

Do you remember the stone we put there, James?

(Put where?)

At the grave.

(Yes, father, yes, uncle. Whose grave?)

Father's. . . . Your father's.

(Yes, I remember it well.)

You mean this ride?

(No.)

Do you mean when we went to see Nannie?

(No, not to see Nannie. But can you tell what happened to you and me?)

I am thinking of the day we went and



Waiting for a "Communication."

put the stone at their graves. James, can't you remember getting in the water? (Yes, many times in my life, but not on that occasion.)

I think we are thinking of two different things. Do you remember what I said to you about George the Sunday we went . . . Shot or dog. I do not at the moment recall. . . . Let me think. You don't mean the Sunday afternoon, do you?

(Yes, uncle, that's right.)

Why, yes, I remember well. Do you remember the little breakdown we had near the creek?

(Breakdown is right.)

Hold on a minute, James. Breakdown I

remember? Remember the red horse. Yes, I remember how he stood . . . St . . . while we hitched up.

(Yes, Right. Do you remember what it was that frightened the horse?)

Shot or dog. I do not at the moment recall.

(Now, uncle, I shall prove that I remember one thing about it. Do you recall the boy with . . . A wheel? (Goat wagon.) [Much excitement.] Oh, yes, I do recall it very well. I could only think of dog-

Dr. Hyslop explains the whole incident as follows:

"I had put a stone at my father's grave, and after it had been done my uncle and I drove out to the cemetery to see it. This suffices to explain the drive which he had in mind, while I had another incident in view which prevented my seeing at once what he was thinking about. The incidents of the drive which I had in mind are as follows:

"The next day, Sunday, after my father's death we received a telegram from a friend in Chicago saying that he was dangerously ill and asking us to

find the brother and inform him of the fact. We took a horse and buggy to deliver the telegram. When near the railway, not a creek, a negro boy with a goat and wagon was in the road. As we passed the horse shied and began to run. He took the vehicle on a slope and it was upset, dragging it over both of us, injuring me rather badly and bruising my uncle considerably. The shaft was broken and we had to tie it up very much as he described here.

I do not remember the details exactly. But the harness was badly broken and injured, and we had to repair it as best we could. The horse was a red bay horse. We arrived home late in the evening. We went to my uncle's nephew to get another horse. Apparently this is what is meant by 'Nannie,' possibly referring to his wife's name, though I doubt it. Her name was 'Annie,' not 'Nannie.' I rather incline to think that the 'Nannie' referred to some one else. My aunt Nannie was at his own house at the time, and the reference may be a confusion. The reference to the horse standing while we hitched it up is not exactly accurate. The horse after the fright was so excited that we secured another that was very quiet, but we had a great time getting the fiery horse to become calm. I do not remember whether we talked about George on either ride or not. It is possible.

But one of the most interesting features of this long series of communications is the misunderstanding at the outset which existed in his mind as to the incident which I had in mind, and the natural explanation of it which came to clear up a previous confusion and apparently false incident. The reader will notice that the communicator did not at once perceive what I was trying to get, but when he all at once discovered that we must be thinking of different things, he came direct to the incident which I wanted. The failure to perceive what I wanted at first was perfectly natural from the point of view which he evidently had in mind.

The reader should notice carefully that when I referred the second time to 'the ride just after father passed out,' my uncle at once said: 'Your father told you before, but had it on his mind, Eliza.' This is a remarkable statement. It means that my father had attempted to tell the incident before, as an intermediary, and got it confused with my Aunt Eliza. In the sittings making up my first report my father, referring to my Aunt Eliza by name in another incident and confusing his own identity, said:

"I have something better. Ask her if she recalls the evening when we broke the wheel of our wagon and who tried to cover it up so it would not leak out, so to speak." On July 3, 1890, he reminded me, through Dr. Hodgson, in my absence, that I should look up the incident, 'broken wheel.' On Feb. 5, 1900, in the present report, my father says more distinctly: 'What I now ask is that Eliza should recall the drive home and . . . let me see a moment . . . I am sure . . . but it was one of the shafts; but the wagon broke, some part of it, and we tied it with a cord. I remember this very well.'

This is evidently the passage to which my uncle refers, and it is apparently an attempt of my father to tell for my uncle an incident which would prove his identity to my aunt, who was opposed to this work, and he evidently supposed on my question about the ride that the incident had been made sufficiently clear which it had not. It is remarkable that he should indicate so clear a consciousness of my father's confusion of the incident with Eliza, his wife. But for that the meaning of the previous incident would never have been known. It is no wonder that he thought of another ride.

In reference to my father's first allusion to the incident, an allusion confused with the attempt to mention incidents in his early life before I was born, it is interesting to discover a meaning to the mention of the effort to conceal the accident. My uncle and I after the mishap resolved to say nothing about it, as we did not wish to alarm any one with what was in fact a dangerous accident. But we were so injured that we could not conceal it and had to finally tell all about it. I did not get over the effects of it for six months, and my uncle was perhaps as long recovering. We had to laugh at our own efforts to conceal the accident.

My uncle made no further attempt to communicate in this series and no more reference was made to him. The last incident, with its details, was sufficient to redeem all his previous communications from discredit, and there seemed to be reasons for permitting others to do most of the work."

Dr. Hyslop stated to a Times reporter that the spirit of the late Dr. Richard Hodgson of Boston, the well-known investigator of alleged spiritualistic phenomena, had informed him that the trouble spirits had in communicating and the resulting confusion was because of