

**PSYCHOMETRY AND
THOUGHT-TRANSFERANCE,
WITH PRACTICAL
HINTS FOR EXPERIMENTS**

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Psychometry and Thought-transference, with Practical Hints for Experiments by N. C.

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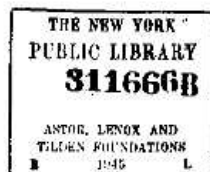
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By N. C., F.T.S.

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.,
AND AMERICAN APPENDIX.*

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INTRODUCTION.

It is forty or more years since the word "Psychometry" was coined by Prof. J. R. Buchanan, of America. He intended by it to express the power of the human brain to detect a certain subtle fluid, or aura, which pervades all things in nature, and preserves indefinitely micrographic impressions, images, or pictures of all things which have had objective existence—Nature's memory, in short. It is about as long since Baron Karl von Reichenbach, an eminent Austrian metallurgical chemist, reported a series of delicate experiments he had made with neuro-sensitives in the same direction, though not upon identical lines. The results of the two scientific observers were mutually corroborative, and unitedly opened out a limitless field of research of the deepest interest and value. If the Western mind had not been so completely dazzled by the phenomena of mediumship and spiritualism, doubtless the clues afforded by Buchanan and Reichenbach would have been well followed up, and psychical science by this time have been greatly advanced. Forty years of phenomena have at last begun to dull the edge of public curiosity; and, though mediumistic phenomena grew more and more weird and sensational, a healthy reaction towards the calm study of spiritual philosophy has set in. Mesmerism, too long neglected, is again receiving the attention it merits; and this, if continued, must inevitably lead to a rational comprehension of many psychical mysteries. The experiments of Dr. Charcot and other French biologists, in the public hospitals of their country, have yielded results of the highest importance; and, it may be also added, corroborative proofs of the value of the pioneer researches of the two eminent men above mentioned.

Not that they are as yet getting their proper credit; quite the contrary. The new experimenters are rechristening the old facts, as Manchester exporters sometimes substitute their own trade-labels for the American ones on cloth sent out to India. But Time and Justice are twins.

The literature of Psychometry has, for the reasons stated, been very meagre. Besides Professor and Mrs. Denton's "Soul of Things," a few articles in the long-extinct "Journal of Man"; a chapter in Dr. Buchanan's "Outlines of Anthropology"; a biographical memoir of a Mrs. Samantha Mettler, an American psychometer; "Psychometry," a work recently published by Dr. Buchanan, but which does only justice to one of the noblest of specialties, and a few less important publications, the literary field has been practically unoccupied. The time has come to issue an elementary treatise, giving in very simple language, yet clearly and scientifically, all that can now be compiled as to the rationale of

Psychometry and Thought-transference, with practical directions for making experiments. Mesmeric research is attended with a good deal of risk, and should be pursued by those only who have absolute self-control, an inflexible will, great power of mental concentration, and other intellectual, moral, and physical qualities, not too commonly met with in ordinary society. But the psychometer catches his impressions from inanimate objects, — letters, clothing, pictures, medals, coins, minerals, weapons, manufactured objects of all sorts, etc., — equally as well as from contact with the mesmeric auras of persons, and makes his researches with little or no danger to himself, if care is taken to avoid giving him articles noxious in themselves or in infused auras. And again, while a good clairvoyant "sommnambule" is excessively rare to find, good psychometers may be met with in almost every family circle, certainly in every social gathering. Thus the inducement to study Nature through Psychometry is very great, while its results are in the highest degree fascinating, as a perusal of "The Soul of Things" will show.

The present compilation has been made, at my own suggestion, by a medical Theosophist. It pretends to be nothing more than an elementary hand-book of the dual subject, but it will be found to contain the substance of all that is for the present available. As long ago as the year 1852 I verified, by personal experiment, the claims of Psychometry, and have ever since been in friendly correspondence with Dr. Buchanan upon the subject. I have also enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing his own experiments upon sensitives, which proved beyond question the possibility of detecting the nature of drugs and other substances, done up in wrappers and held in the sensitive's hand.* Among the Siddhis (spiritual powers) which develop themselves in the course of the Indian system of psychic training called Yoga, is one which gives the ascetic a knowledge of the "seven worlds," or seven planes of evolution. (Patanjali's "Yoga Sutras," Book III., Aphorism 27.) All veils before Nature, all masks that hide her face from man, are torn away; the hidden becomes exposed; the clouds of Ignorance dissolve; the sun of Knowledge shines. The Yogi hears the latent as well as the non-vibrating sounds, reads the pages of Past, Present, and Future with equal ease, sees whatever he fixes his thought upon, whether happening at this moment or at a period millenniums back. To develop these supreme soul-faculties he must gain perfect mastery over every physical passion, prejudice, egoism, and other breeder of mental illusion. It would be sheer folly, in this view of the case, to expect that the casual psychometrical experimenter could acquire a tittle of the psychical insight of the Indian Yogi; and, though "The Soul of Things" is full of most interesting accounts of the recall from the Astral Light of latent pictures of past races, past languages, forms, species, scenes, etc., and one is, as it were, crushed by the thought that nothing is lost, while everything but passes behind a screen; yet one sees how infinitely more could be known by a Yogi who had fully attained the development of Yoga. But all cannot be

* As an interesting coincidence, I may state that, in the interval between laying down my pen last evening at this point, and resuming it this morning, I have received a letter from Mrs. B. . . . wife of a science professor in an Indian College, in which she says: "My husband tried a very simple experiment on me the other morning, after reading Buchanan's new work ("Psychometry"). I resented it very much, inasmuch as, though it proved very successful, it made me very ill all day. He gave me Tartar Emetic, in thick folds of paper, to hold, with the result above stated."

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Yogis at this stage of cosmic evolution; and it is enough that, by the help of Buchanan and Reichenbach, we can get at least a glimpse into the galleries of the Astral Light, where Time stores up his unfading pictures.

H. S. OLCOCK.

ADYAR, 1886.

COMPILER'S PREFACE.

“To investigate unexplained laws in nature and the psychical powers of man” is the third object of the Theosophical Society. Hitherto this line of inquiry has been somewhat neglected for the higher objects of promoting Universal Brotherhood and studying the principles of Esoteric Philosophy. Fellows of the Society seem to be in doubt how to proceed in carrying out the above-mentioned third object. To meet this difficulty I have compiled the following short pamphlet, the purpose of which is, firstly, to give in a concise form such evidence as has already been collected on Psychometry and Thought-reading, which supply a key to some of the chambers of the unknown, constituting in a sense the threshold of arcane science; and, secondly, to give a few simple directions as to the best modes of conducting experiments for the use of such branches of the Theosophical Society as are willing to assist in the investigation.

N. C.

PSYCHOMETRY

AND

THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE.

HISTORICAL.

ALTHOUGH what may be termed the psychic science has been known from the days of remote antiquity to the few whose motto was "To keep silence," yet the interest in it which has now been awakened in all parts of the civilized world is of comparatively recent growth. The credit of drawing public attention in this direction is in a measure due to Professor Buchanan of America, who, in 1849, wrote:¹ "About nine years since, in conversation with Bishop Polk of the Episcopal Church, he informed me that his own sensibility was so acute that if he should by accident touch a piece of brass, even in the night, when he could not see what he touched, he immediately felt the influence through his system, and could recognize the offensive metallic taste." This conversation suggested a line of inquiry to the professor, who, for some years, pursued a series of experiments with the object of discovering the action of metals, drugs, and strongly flavored substances upon persons of that sensitive temperament which is the usual environment of the psychic sense. His results were given out from time to time in the "Journal of Man," and have more recently been embodied in a work entitled "Psychometry." At an early stage the investigation was taken up by Professor Denton and his wife, who performed together a vast number of experiments, principally with objects of archaeological interest, and published a full account in 1863, in their well-known book, "The Soul of Things," which has now passed through a number of editions. The year 1882 witnessed the foundation in London of the Society for Psychical Research, who at once took up the subject of *supersensuous perception* and the *nature and laws of the direct action of mind on mind*. An exhaustive series of experiments under test conditions has been carried on ever since by scientific members of that society, and recorded in the reports which have from time to time been issued by them, and have brought a large portion of the English reading public to, at any rate, a partial belief in what has been termed "thought-transference," or, more popularly, "thought-reading." English society was astounded at the spectacle of a number of her recognized scientists giving their

¹ Journal of Man, Vol. I., p. 51.

attention to things which it had been customary to consider as merely the humbug of quacks and charlatans. Talk led to action, and before long in English drawing-rooms ladies and gentlemen were to be seen practising what is called the "Willing Game," or, blindfolded and hand in hand, wandering about the room in search of the hidden pin. Everywhere the question was asked, —

"WHAT IS THOUGHT-READING AND WHAT IS PSYCHOMETRY?"

Although the dual title of Psychometry and Thought-transference has been given to this pamphlet, these two subjects are in reality branches of one and the same psychic science, to which the name Psychometry — from the Greek *ψυχή* *ψυχή* *μέτρον*, soul as a measure — is as applicable as any other. For an impression to pass from one person to another, or from a picture to a person, we may assume from analogy, (1) that there is some intervening medium through which that impression can be transmitted; (2) that there is a force to give the momentum necessary to convey it from one point to another; and (3) that there is an apparatus capable of registering the impression and converting it into terms of ordinary consciousness. Let us take the familiar illustration of the electric telegraph. The battery gives the necessary force, the impression is transferred through the wire, and the instrument registers it. But, it may be said, in many of the recorded cases of thought-transference — the telepathic appearance of one to another at a distance, for instance — there is no wire to conduct the impression, so the analogy falls to the ground. Not so. For one of Edison's latest additions to applied electrical science is an instrument by which a telegraphic message can be shot from one point to another — within certain limits of distance — with no more solid conducting medium for its transmission than is afforded by the atmosphere surrounding our globe.

Furthermore, the possibility of numerous telepathic vibrations crossing in their transit, without interfering with each other, has a close analogy in electrical science; for in the "Pall Mall Gazette" for May 27, 1886, we read:—

"The invention of the phonopore serves to remind us how small a corner of the veil of nature we have lifted in matters electrical. The duplexing, or even quadruplexing, of an Atlantic cable, by means of which two or four separate messages can be sent from each end of one cable at the same time without conflict or confusion, is about as startling, when carefully considered, as any purely material occurrence can be. But the phonopore, the principle of which consists in employing the electrical 'induction noises' as motive-power to work telegraph instruments, or transmit the voice, or do both at once, is far more remarkable. Mr. Langdon Davies has proved the existence of this new special form of electrical energy, and has constructed already a variety of instruments to embody it practically. The mathematico-physical explanation of the 'phonophoric impulse' has yet to be found."

If electrical messages can cross in a cable without interfering with each other, why should not telepathic impulses betwixt persons on opposite sides of the globe? The one phenomenon is not more remarkable than the other.

Now, the hypothesis of an ether filling all space, and even interpenetrating solid bodies, has been maintained by philosophers and scientists of diverse