"She distinctly remembers having perished on the scaffold in a previous existence."

SOME STRANGE TRUE STORIES OF "ANCESTRAL MEMORY," SHOWING THE MYSTERIOUS INFLUENCE OF THE PAST ON THE LIVES OF LIVING PEOPLE.

BY LADY FRANCES GRESLEY.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. PAGET.

It is with some diffidence that I take up my pen to write down my views on this subject, which has for a long time deeply interested me. I do not pretend that my opinions are of any value; I simply state my views and give a few instances which I venture to say point to what many people assert as being "reincarnation" is in reality nothing but "ancestral memory." We all have many different strains of blood in our veins. First of all, we each have two grandmothers, four great-grandmothers, eight great-great, and so on; therefore, naturally we are made up of many ingredients.
and if personal features and characteristics can be handed down from one generation to another, why should not certain places bring back to us this ancestral memory in a manner that the following stories can better illustrate than my imperfectly expressed theories?

A gentleman I knew was once visiting one of our foreign possessions when an English regiment marched past, and he forthwith became wildly and strangely interested, in fact obsessed, in a way which was altogether foreign to his nature, and he could not rest until he had been to the barracks, got introduced to the Colonel, and examined the records of the regiment, when he found that a forebear of his had held a commission in this very same regiment only about a hundred years back.

Here is another instance. A lady lived in the North Country in the Lake District, and married a man at the other side of England, and she never again visited her land of lakes. Years passed, and when her son, a young man of about twenty, came for the first time in his life to his mother’s country, he knew his way about the most intricate walks.

Again, the following curious facts actually happened to a lady with whom I am intimately acquainted, and whose veracity is unimpeachable. She has always had a dislike to games of cards, and to see a card-table prepared in the evening with the lights burning on it always gave her a feeling of shivering and dread. At last she said to herself she felt sure an ancestor of hers had ruined himself at cards. After many years had passed, her husband was one day reading some old memoirs, and found this actually was the case; in fact, this ancestor had in one night gambled away his whole patrimony.

The same lady was visiting Fontainebleau, and though she had never been there before, the whole place seemed extraordinarily familiar to her, and she laughingly exclaimed: “I had a pre-existence here. I do not think I was exactly Royalty, but I was about Royalty, or closely connected with it; in fact,” she added naively, “mine was no humble lot.”

Her husband expostulated: “My dear, you must not say this, it does not sound well.” She replied: “I am not talking for effect, I am merely stating exactly what I feel.” On returning to England, the lady had a longing and craving for France, which was quite un-English and unnatural to her. Years passed, and, à propos de bottes, her brother remarked: “I had a pre-existence at the Court of France.” My friend replied: “How strange, that is always what I feel.” A year or so afterwards they discovered the following facts—namely, that she and her brother are, like many other families in England, descended straight from Charles II. and Louise de Kerouaille, and on studying that illustrious lady’s pedigree she found that, on the distaff side, the grandmother of “Madam Carwell,” as the English mob called her, was a de Rieux—a family related to nearly every crowned head in Europe; whilst Louise herself was very highly born. Some authorities have most incorrectly and carelessly stated that she was a parvenu, but a look at her pedigree silences for ever this assertion. The lady further discovered that another forebear had commanded Louis XIII.’s Scottish Archers; also that a third ancestor had been Ambassador at Versailles. She had long cherished a passion for this place, and a friend once said to her: “You were once a Court Lady there, in a previous incarnation, and I never see you without thinking of Versailles and its fountains.” To this she replied: “That may be only an unconscious suggestion from my brain, as I am so deeply interested in the place.” And it was not till afterwards that she discovered about the ancestor who had lived there as ambassador.

I feel reluctant to quote one last instance of what everyone will term my “lunatic” friend, and will suggest for her a comfortable asylum, though I may remark she is perfectly sane and sober. She mentioned more than once to her husband that she distinctly remembered having perished on the scaffold in a previous existence, and one day she was looking over her own
family pedigree, which, curiously enough, she had never even glanced at before, when, to her surprise, she discovered that various ancestors of hers had been beheaded.

The memory of the scaffold may also unemotional man of the middle classes, whose grandmother had been a Sicilian peasant, visited that island during his honeymoon for the first time in his life. The night he arrived the peasants flocked round him and

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have come down to her through Charles I. and Mary Queen of Scots, through the aforesaid Louise de Kerouaille.

Robert Hichens, in his curious and painful book, "The Call of the Blood," describes how an educated and hitherto danced the Tarantella, which, needless to say, he had never seen before, and to his wife's horror he joined in the strange dance, yelling, shouting, and prancing about exactly like the natives, who had done it all their lives.

What I believe to be another example
of this mysterious influence of the past on the lives of living persons is to be seen in those cases where people suffer from terrors they cannot exactly explain. Scant sympathy is generally shown to these poor mortals, and the words "hysteria," "lunacy," etc., are freely applied. Nevertheless, evolutionists tell us that these people in reality are suffering from some experiences their ancestors have been through; and it has been suggested by a learned professor that some people have the power of throwing out great mind energy in abnormal circumstances - joy, sorrow, and particularly terror, such as would be experienced by a person being murdered, and that the impression may be received years afterwards by those who enter the locale of these past events.

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If chords are violently struck on an organ and a grand piano is near, the sound vibrates all up the wires of the piano, and it reproduces automatically the corresponding note. Also, we know
that telepathy is an established fact, and that we have in our bodies certain essences of those from whom we are descended. It is surely, therefore, a possible theory that these essences (or perhaps ingredients is a better word) would respond to their surroundings in the same manner as the case of the organ and the piano instanced above, and that when conditions are favourable, remarkable phenomena should result.

At Fontainebleau, Louise de Kerouaille experienced great joy, because at that place her adored son, the Duke of Richmond, embraced Roman Catholicism (he abjured it at Whitehall a few years later). At the former place we may presume she threw out great mind energy, and I suggest that my friend, her descendant, being a "sensitive," received the impression of that emotion on her brain when she went there in the twentieth century.

Before my birth my father spent some time in India, and though during his lifetime I never remember that he spoke to me of that place, and certainly never showed me any pictures of his travels in the East, still I feel convinced if I went there I should experience a feeling of pre-existence; in short, that the impressions his brain received from that country would in the same way be transmitted to mine.

That human personality is undying, and survives bodily death, eminent scientists have done much towards proving in the last few years. Also, Sir Oliver Lodge says it is an open question in science whether or not emotion can be put into matter. Therefore, with all these deeply interesting questions still on the tapis, why should one not say that what many people assert is "reincarnation" (though they are utterly unable to prove it) is really nothing else but "ancestral memory" subtly transmitted to descendants? I feel I am now encroaching into the realms of psychology, and am getting out of my depth, and therefore I will leave it to those who are wiser than I am to answer the questions and problems imperfectly suggested by this article. \textit{Out vivra verra}.

\*\* The writer is willing to give the name and address of the lady who had the above curious experiences.