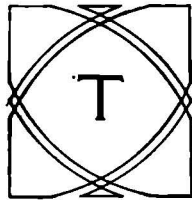




SCIENCE AND THE HAUNTED HOUSE

By H. ADDINGTON BRUCE



TO the man who prides himself on his "common sense" the problem of the haunted house is not at all a problem that requires the aid of science for its solution. In his opinion the matter is perfectly simple. Rats, cats, owls, squirrels, old furniture, loose boards, the moaning of the wind—such things as these, plus a lively imagination, are quite enough to account for the weirdest manifestations that ever vexed the soul of the superstitious.

Yet, after all, the matter is not so simple. No doubt the common sense view is correct in the great majority of cases. In the dead of night, particularly in an old, creaking house, a person afflicted with nerves and imagination is disposed to attribute ordinary sounds to supernatural agencies. Or, waking suddenly from a deep sleep, there is always the possibility of "seeing things" in a room illuminated only by the deceptive light of the moon. Nevertheless, it would be far from the truth to assert that one can thus readily dispose of all ghosts and hauntings. Recent investigation by inquirers of scientific temperament and training has made it certain that there is a large residuum of occult experiences which, if they are to be explained at all, must be explained on a very different basis from that of the rats-loose-boards-moaning-wind theory. And it is precisely because of this residuum that belief in haunted houses persists to the present day.

The Experience of Miss Goodrich-Freer

TAKE, for example, an experience that befell Miss Goodrich-Freer, a well-known member of the Society for Psychical Research, in Hampton Court Palace. This old building is unquestionably one of the most famous of all haunted houses. It dates back to the time of the first Tudors, and according to tradition is haunted by several ghosts, notably the ghosts of Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third queen; Catharine Howard, whose spirit is said to go shrieking along the gallery where she vainly begged brutal King Henry to spare her life; and Sybil Penn, King Edward VI's foster-mother. Twice of late years the Howard ghost—or something that passed for it—has been heard, once by Lady Eastlake, and once by Mrs. Cavendish Boyle. The latter was sleeping in an apartment next to the haunted gallery—which has long been unoccupied and used only as a storeroom for old pictures—when she was suddenly awakened by a loud and most unearthly shriek proceeding from that quarter, followed immediately by perfect silence. Lady Eastlake's experience was exactly similar.

Both ladies, of course, may have heard a real shriek, possibly coming from some nightmare-tormented occupant of the palace. But no explanation of this sort is adequate in the case of Miss Goodrich-Freer, who passed a night at Hampton Court for the sole purpose of ascertaining whether or not there was any foundation for its ghostly legends.

The room she selected for her vigil was one especially reputed to be haunted, and opened into a second room, the door between the two, however, being blocked by a heavy piece of furniture. Thus the only means of entrance into her room was by a door from the corridor, and this she locked and bolted. After which, feeling confident that nothing but a real ghost could get in to trouble her, she settled down to read an

essay on "Shall We Degrade Our Standard of Value?" a subject manifestly free from matters likely to occasion nervousness.

In fact, the essay was so dull that by half past one Miss Goodrich-Freer, not able to keep awake longer, undressed, dropped into bed, and was almost instantly asleep. Several hours later she was aroused by a noise as of some one opening the furniture-barricaded door. At this she put out her hand to reach a match-box which she knew was lying on a table at the head of the bed.

"I did not reach the matches," she reports. "It seemed to me that a detaining hand was laid on mine. I withdrew it quickly and gazed around into the darkness. Some minutes passed in blackness and silence. I had the sensation of a presence in the room, and finally, mindful of the tradition that a ghost should be spoken to, I said gently, 'Is any one there? Can I do anything for you?' I remembered that the last person who entertained the ghost had said, 'Go away, I don't want you,' and I hoped that my visitor would admire my better manners and be responsive. However, there was no answer, no sound of any kind."

Now Miss Goodrich-Freer left the bed and felt all

around the room in the dark, until satisfied that she was alone. The corridor door was still locked and bolted; the piece of furniture against the inner door was in place. So she returned to bed. Almost at once a soft light began to glow with increasing brightness. It seemed to radiate from a central point, which gradually took form and became a tall, slender woman, moving slowly across the room. At the foot of the bed she stopped, so that the amazed observer had time to examine her profile and general appearance.

"Her face," Miss Goodrich-Freer says, "was insipidly pretty, that of a woman from thirty to thirty-five years of age, her figure slight, her dress of a soft, dark material, having a full skirt and broad sash or soft waistband tied high up almost under her arms, a crossed or draped handkerchief over the shoulders and sleeves which I noticed fitted very tight below the elbow. In spite of all this definiteness I was conscious that the figure was unsubstantial, and felt quite guilty of absurdity in asking once more, 'Will you let me help you? Can I be of any use to you?'"

"My voice sounded preternaturally loud, but I felt no surprise at noticing that it produced no effect upon my visitor. She stood still for perhaps two minutes, though it is very difficult to estimate time on such occasions. Then she raised her hands, which were long and white, and held them before her as she sank upon her knees and slowly buried her face in the palms in an attitude of prayer—when quite suddenly the light went out, and I was alone in the darkness.

"I felt that the scene was ended, the curtain drawn, and had no hesitation in lighting the candle at my side. . . . The clock struck four."

Again investigation showed that the corridor door was locked and bolted as she had left it, and the inner door still firmly barricaded. Consequently, skeptical though she had been when she arrived at Hampton Court Palace, Miss Goodrich-Freer in leaving it entertained no doubt that she had witnessed a genuine psychical manifestation.

A Vision of Marie Antoinette

THE same conclusion was forced upon two young ladies, Miss Elizabeth Morison and Miss Frances Lamont, in connection with a visit paid by them to another famous haunted house, the Petit Trianon at Versailles, the favorite summer home of that unfortunate queen Marie Antoinette, whose ghost, as well as the ghosts of her attendants, has long been alleged to be visible at times in and around it. Miss Morison and Miss Lamont had been sightseeing in the royal palace, but tiring of this had set off, in the early afternoon, to walk to the Trianon. Neither of them knew just where it was located, but taking the general direction indicated on Baedeker's map, they finally came to a broad drive, which, had they only known it, would have led them directly to their destination. As it was, they crossed the drive and went up a narrow lane through a thick wood to a point where three paths diverged. Here they began to have a series of experiences which, comparatively insignificant in themselves, had a sequel so amazing that it would be incredible were it not that the veracity of both ladies has been established beyond question.

Ahead of them, on the middle path, they saw two men clad in a curious, old-fashioned costume of long, greenish coats, knee breeches, and small, three-cornered hats. Taking them for gardeners they asked to be shown the way, and



MARIE ANTOINETTE



CATHARINE HOWARD
MURDERED BY HENRY VIII

and have not been there in the memory of man; the paths they trod have long been effaced; there is no kiosk, nor does anybody living, except Miss Morison and Miss Lamont, remember having seen one in the Trianon grounds; on the very spot where Miss Morison saw the lady in the peculiar dress a large bush is growing; and the rear door, out of which stepped the young man who guided them around to the front, opens from an old chapel that has been in a ruinous condition for many years, the door itself being "bolted, barred, and cobwebbed," and unused since the time of Marie Antoinette.

On the other hand, their personal researches in the archives of France have brought to light so many confirmatory facts that both Miss Morison and Miss Lamont are firmly persuaded that the Trianon, its environment, and its people were once exactly as they appeared to them; and that in very truth they saw the place as it looked, not at the time they first visited it, but in the closing years of the French Monarchy more than a century earlier.

Death-Announcing Ghosts

THAT historic German ghost, the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns, would likewise seem to have more than a legendary basis. So far as I am aware this ghost has never been investigated by properly qualified psychical researchers of the standing of Miss Goodrich-Freer, but its credentials are too well authenticated to be ignored. The mission of the White Lady, apparently, is to announce the death of some member of the Hohenzollern family, and her most frequent haunting place is the royal palace at Berlin. She was seen as early

as 1628, and since the time of Frederick the Great her appearance has been regularly chronicled on the eve of the death of the King of Prussia.

For the matter of that, there are not a few families whose ancestral homes, according to tradition, are haunted by death-announcing ghosts. This is particularly the case with certain distinguished British families. The Yorkshire Middletons, a Catholic family, are said to be warned of approaching death by the apparition of a Benedictine nun. Cortachy Castle, which belongs to the Earls of Airlie, is haunted by a ghostly drummer who beats his drum whenever death is near an Airlie. Two white owls perching on the roof of the family mansion are taken



JANE SEYMOUR
THIRD QUEEN OF HENRY VIII

were told to go straight ahead. This brought them to a little clearing that had in it a light garden kiosk, circular and like a bandstand, near which a man was seated. As they approached he turned his head and stared at them, and his expression was so repellent that they felt greatly frightened. The next instant, coming from they knew not where, and breathless as if from running, a second man appeared, and speaking in French of a peculiar accent, ordered them brusquely to turn to the right, saying that the Trianon lay in that direction. Just as they reached it they were again intercepted, this time by a young man who stepped out of a rear door, banged it behind him, and with a somewhat insolent air guided them to the main entrance of the palace.

While they were hurrying thither, Miss Morison noticed a lady, seated below a terrace, holding out a paper as though reading at arm's length. She glanced up as they passed, and Miss Morison, observing with surprise the peculiar cut of her gown, saw that she had a pretty "though not young" face.

"I looked straight at her," she adds in the formal statement she has made regarding their adventure, "but some indescribable feeling made me turn away disturbed at her being there."

Afterwards this "indescribable feeling" was accounted for when Miss Morison identified in a rare portrait of Marie Antoinette the lady she had seen seated below the terrace!

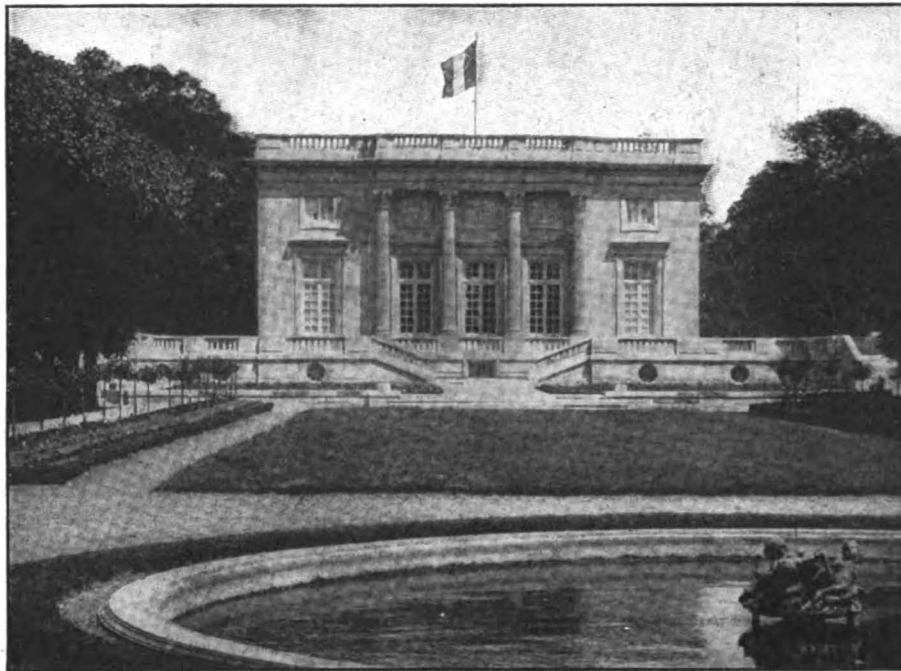
Still more remarkable, subsequent visits to the Trianon brought to both ladies the startling knowledge that the actual surroundings of the place and the place itself differ vastly from what they saw that summer afternoon. The woods they entered are not there,

as a sure omen of death in the Arundel of Wardour family. Finally, tradition has it that the death of an Argyll is foretold in a most impressive manner by a phantom hearse driving up to the door.

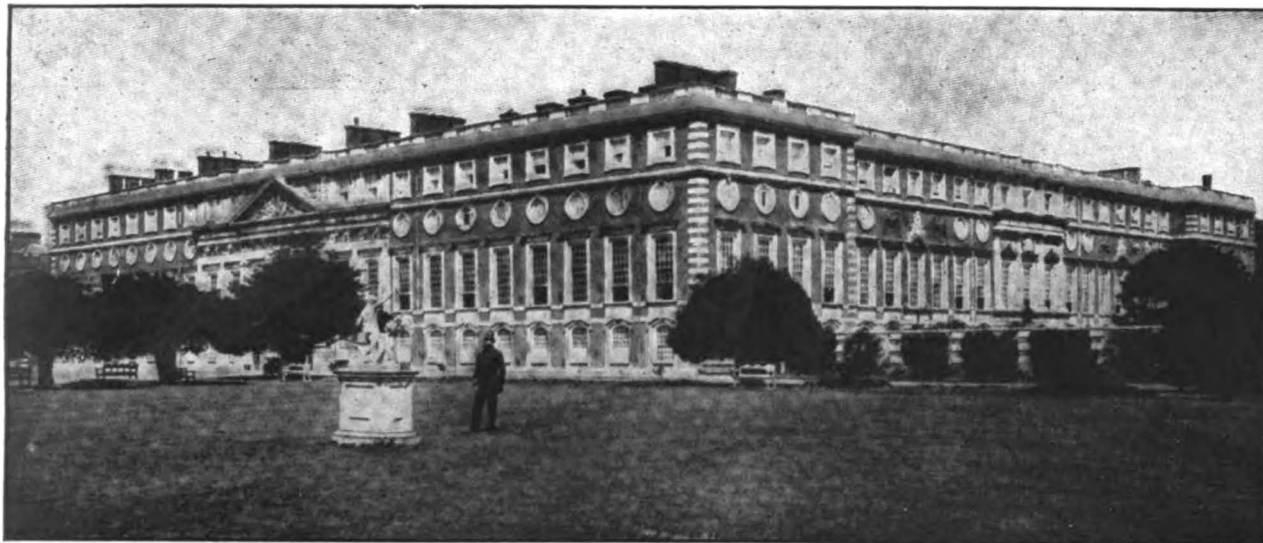
Fortunately, most ghosts that infest haunted houses are not of such direful portent. At worst they are simply mischievous, frightening timid folk half out of their wits by making mysterious noises and popping out upon them at unexpected moments. Of course, this of itself is bad enough, and makes it easy to understand why haunted houses are soon vacated, and why the merest rumor that a ghost has invaded his premises is enough to drive a landlord to despair. Nobody except a hardened psychical researcher would care to occupy for any length of time a dwelling-place in which he might expect to have such an experience as, for example, that reported by Mr. D. M. Tyre as occurring to a sister of his in an isolated cottage which the Tyre family had leased as a summer home.

One day, it seems, Mr. Tyre and another sister had gone to the nearest village, five miles distant, leaving their younger sister in charge of the house. On their return they were met by her, some little distance from the cottage. They found her in a highly agitated state, which was explained when she informed them that an old woman had unceremoniously entered the cottage and taken up her quarters in the kitchen, lying on a bed that stood against the wall. Naturally they at once hurried home, but on going into the kitchen saw nobody in the bed, the covering of which was quite unruffled. When they told their sister nobody was there, she declared vehemently:

"Why, I can see her plainly. She has her clothes on, and is lying with her face turned to the wall."



THE LITTLE TRIANON, FAVORITE SUMMER HOME OF MARIE ANTOINETTE, AS IT APPEARS TODAY



HAMPTON COURT PALACE. THE RESIDENCE OF HENRY VIII—A FAMOUS "HAUNTED HOUSE." THE SCENE OF VARIOUS WELL-AUTHENTICATED GHOSTLY APPEARANCES

Again they assured her she was mistaken. Warmly she protested that she was not. Then, as it dawned on her that she was seeing something the others could not see, she became panic-stricken and fled from the room. Two days afterwards she again beheld the figure on the bed, and this time, retaining her self-control, described it in much detail. Mr. Tyre still felt that it was all a matter of the imagination. But he soon had reason to come to another opinion.

"My sister," he relates, "mentioned what she had seen to a Mrs. M'P—, our nearest neighbor, and when she described the figure to her, Mrs. M'P— well nigh swooned away, saying that the description tallied exactly with that of the dead wife of the man who had lived in the house before us. He had cruelly ill-treated her, to such an extent that she had never recovered from the last beating he gave her. Mrs. M'P— herself had been summoned to care for her, and found her lying on the bed, dressed, and with her face turned toward the wall, as seen by my sister."

Hotel Ghosts

NOR is it only houses with a "past" that are haunted. The most modern building is liable to be tenanted by a ghost. And, indeed, these appearances are not confined to dwelling-places. If there are haunted castles and cottages, there are also haunted churches, barracks, and theaters. There are even haunted libraries and haunted hotels. One of the best attested ghost stories I have come across concerns a certain hotel in Madeira, a guest at which, Mr. John E. Husbands, awoke one moonlight night to find a young fellow standing in his room, dressed in tennis flannels and pointing straight at him. Mr. Husbands, as may be imagined, promptly sat up and asked the young fellow what he wanted, and when he made no reply started to put him out of the room. The instant he sprang from his bed the mysterious stranger vanished. Next day he told another guest, Miss Falkner, of the affair, and shortly afterwards that lady showed him a photograph in which he immediately recognized the nocturnal intruder. It was the photograph of a young man who had suddenly died, some months previously, in the very room Mr. Husbands was occupying.

In like fashion, Mrs. Kate M. Clerke, having passed through the empty drawing-room of a Sorrento hotel, chanced to look back, and to her amazement saw the figure of an old woman in the room she had that instant left. There was something in her appearance that sent Mrs. Clerke hurrying away in an access of inexplicable fear. In the morning she reported what she had seen, but was assured that nobody connected with the hotel answered to the description she gave. She noticed, however, that her informants looked greatly alarmed as they listened to her story. A fortnight afterward the parish priest chanced to call at the hotel, and Mrs. Clerke, happening to speak to him of her odd, little adventure, he said to her:

"Madam, you have accurately described the old mistress of this house, who died six months before you came here. The people of

the hotel have already been to me about it; it has caused them much anxiety lest you should leave."

In commenting on her experience, Mrs. Clerke said:

"I ought to mention that I had no knowledge of there having been such a person in existence until her likeness appeared in the room. Certainly, for breaking through the barrier of the unseen, it was a most futile visit."

And, in fact, the visits of most house-haunting ghosts appear to be entirely objectless, except when they come, like the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns or the Drummer of Cortachy Castle, to announce an impending death. But once in a while ghosts—even hotel ghosts—do serve a useful purpose. Thus, a guest at a Back Bay hotel in Boston was hurrying along a dimly lighted corridor to catch an elevator she thought she saw waiting for her, when unexpectedly the form of a man appeared at the entrance to the elevator. She was almost upon him, and stopped short in order to avoid a collision. At once he disappeared, and she then saw that although the door into the elevator shaft was wide open, the car was at the bottom of the shaft, into which she almost certainly would have fallen had not the phantasmal figure checked her onward rush.

Now, happenings like these that I have related, are manifestly not to be explained on any of the theories dear to "common sense." Rats, loose boards,

and moaning wind fail signally to account for them, nor does it avail to raise the plea that perhaps the narrators did not adhere strictly to the truth. In several of the cases cited strong corroborative evidence has been forthcoming; and besides this it is a commonplace that people do not tell untruths that are likely to bring them into ridicule.

Moreover, persons who have seen ghosts are usually disinclined to have the facts made public. I am frequently in receipt of letters from strangers reporting some sort of psychic experience that they wish me to analyze for them, and nearly always they close their letters by asking me not to publish the experience, or at all events not to make known their names. There is plenty of evidence that hauntings not attributable to nervous imagination do occur, but it is exceedingly difficult to persuade the haunted to go on record concerning them. Their excuse invariably is that they do not wish to be considered superstitious.

Yet, as a matter of fact, it is not at all necessary to resort to the supernatural as the only sufficient explanation of those occurrences that are not reducible to ordinary illusion. In truth, there is one insurmountable obstacle to regarding them as supernatural manifestations, and that is the simple circumstance that the ghosts wear clothes. It is quite conceivable that there really may be ghosts of persons, but nobody who gave the matter a second thought would contend for a moment that there can be ghosts of clothes. Nevertheless, apparitions are always clothed, and sometimes in garments of such modern cut that they were unknown at the time the person seen as a phantom lived on earth.

Apparitions of the Living

ASIDE from this, there is the interesting and by no means unimportant circumstance that houses are sometimes haunted by apparitions not of the dead but of the living. I know of one case in which a gentleman, entering a drawing-room at four in the afternoon, saw seated on the sofa a young lady with "reddish gold" hair, who appeared to be reading a book. There were two other persons in the room, one seated beside her on the sofa, and the visitor was surprised to find that they did not offer to intro-

(Continued on page 57)



THE ROYAL PALACE OF BERLIN—SAID TO BE HAUNTED BY "THE WHITE LADY OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS" WHO APPEARS ON THE EVE OF DEATH

HAUNTED HOUSES

(Continued from page 36)

duce him to the young lady—did not, in fact, seem to see her. Nor when he again looked did he himself see her; she had vanished as suddenly and mysteriously as though the floor had opened and swallowed her.

Later a guest at a week-end party saw the same apparition in the same house, and it was seen a third time by one of the servants. No light was thrown on the strange affair until, a year afterwards, the wife of the son of the family arrived from Australia to pay a first visit to her husband's relatives, and was immediately identified by the servant as the figure she had followed into the dining-room. The two visitors who also had seen the apparition subsequently made the same identification.

In this case and all others of the same type, nobody being dead, it is obviously absurd to raise the cry of "ghosts." Yet all the evidence goes to show that phantasms of the living are fully as realistic, vivid, and impressive as phantasms of the dead; and consequently it is a legitimate inference that they are precisely of the same character. Obviously, too, since it is incredible to suppose that a person can be in two places at the same time—so that a lady can be both in Australia and in a house thousands of miles from Australia—it is a legitimate inference that phantasms whether of the living or of the dead are devoid of objective reality; are, that is to say, always and only hallucinations. And, over and above this, modern science, modern psychological science which has delved so industriously into the workings of the human mind, has brought to light facts enabling us to understand exactly whence and how such hallucinations originate.

The Scientific Explanation

CHIEF among these facts, as an aid to an adequate explanation of the weird hauntings chronicled above, is the discovery that memory is a far more extensive and a far more retentive process than most people are aware of. Psychologists are even inclining to the belief that nothing one has ever experienced is really forgotten. It may, to be sure, have slipped, so to speak, out of the "upper consciousness," so that it cannot be recalled by voluntary effort. But experiment has demonstrated that there always remains a "sub-conscious" registration, and that under appropriate conditions what is buried in the sub-consciousness may once more emerge into the field of conscious recollection. Still further, and no less important, it has been found that memory includes a vastly larger number of mental images than those obtained by the ordinary processes of conscious acquisition.

The merest glancing at an object, the "unconscious" overhearing of a conversation, often is quite enough to impress on the memory the details of the object seen or the words overheard—and this, be it distinctly understood, without the person glancing or overhearing being in the slightest degree aware that he has seen or heard anything. Memory images thus acquired do not ordinarily, it is true, pass from the sub-conscious to the conscious region of the mind. But that they may, and at times do, attain conscious recollection, and frequently attain it in a most dramatic fashion, has been repeatedly verified by scientific experiment.

Thus, there are people who, if they gaze intently into a crystal, a glass of water, or other body with a reflecting surface, have a peculiar faculty for seeing in it miniature pictures. For the most part these pictures represent persons or scenes with which the crystal-

gazer is well acquainted; but occasionally they have to do with matters of which he possesses no conscious remembrance, but which, nevertheless, it is possible to prove have been part of his actual experience. In one striking case, reported by a Boston medical psychologist, Dr. Isador H. Coriat, a lady found it urgently necessary to recall the signature on a check given to her two years before, the exact date of the check, and the name of the bank on which it was drawn. Try as she might, she could remember none of these things. It was suggested to her to look into a crystal, and within a few minutes she was rewarded by seeing a miniature of the check, with the name of the bank, the date, the signature, and even the number plainly discernible!

Nor is it always necessary to use some such device as a crystal to bring about the externalization of memory images. This may result spontaneously not only of things but of persons as indicated by an experience narrated to me by Dr. Morton Prince.

A patient of his came to him one morning in a condition of extreme nervousness, declaring that the previous night she had seen a ghost. "I woke up," said she, "and saw at the foot of my bed a young woman, who gradually faded away." She maintained that at no time had she seen anybody resembling the apparition, but in the minute description she gave, Dr. Prince at once recognized a relative of his, with whom he remembered he had been talking in the hall when the patient last visited him. Saying nothing to her he quietly assembled a few photographs, and, before she departed, asked her to look them over.

"Why," she said, picking one up, "here is my ghost!"

"Yes," was Dr. Prince's reply, "and you saw your ghost in this house when you were here only a few days ago. I was talking to her as you came in."

"But," objected the patient, "I certainly did not see her, for I noticed somebody was with you, and I purposely turned away as I passed, lest I should seem rude."

"All the same," said Dr. Prince, "you saw her without being conscious of it—saw her, as it were, out of the corner of your eye. One fleeting glance would be enough to give you the memory image that you mistook for a ghost."

Undoubtedly Dr. Prince was right, and undoubtedly this dual law of sub-conscious perception and memory is enough to account for the ghosts in the haunted houses cited in this article.

For example, in the case of the ghost seen by Miss Tyre, lying on the kitchen bed, one has only to assume that Miss Tyre had heard, perhaps without paying the least attention to it, an account of the last days of the former mistress of the cottage; and, in the case of the flannel-clad ghost haunting the hotel in Madeira, that the photograph shown to Mr. Husbands by Miss Falkner, enabling him to identify the ghost, had been seen, if perhaps only glanced at, by Mr. Husbands before he saw the ghost. The same would apply to the ghost seen by Mrs. Clerke in the Sorrento hotel, to the Hampton Court ghost that appeared to Miss Goodrich-Freer, and to the ghost of the living lady in Australia. Even the haunting of the Petit Trianon, as experienced by Miss Morison and Miss Lamont, is explicable on this hypothesis of the recrudescence, as hallucinations, of sub-conscious memories.

It is true that both Miss Morison and Miss Lamont profess to have known little about the history of the Petit Trianon previous to their visit to Versailles. But their detailed report of the haunt-

ing, which I have studied carefully, contains statements showing that, sub-consciously at any rate, they must have possessed considerable knowledge of the place. Miss Morison admits that she had, as a girl, great enthusiasm for Marie Antoinette, and had read not a little about her, including an article descriptive of her summer home; while Miss Lamont is a teacher of French history, and accordingly must have had rather more knowledge than the average person regarding the life story of Queen Marie. Besides which, and most significant, there was published, just before they went to Versailles, an illustrated magazine article picturing a historical fête in the gardens of the Petit Trianon, with some account of its history.

It is worth noting, too, that the two ladies were not haunted in exactly the same way, each of them seeing certain people and scenes that were not visible to the other. On the theory of a supernatural manifestation this would be hard to explain, but the difficulty vanishes if we recognize that the sub-conscious knowledge of the Trianon possessed by each must necessarily have differed.

The problem remains to account for the fact, as distinct from the facts, of the haunting. Why should Miss Morison and Miss Lamont, among all the thousands of visitors to the Petit Trianon, alone have had such an experience? To this, assuredly, there is no answer if one is going to stick to the old-fashioned notion of ghosts and attribute to them objective reality. But the answer is very simple on the modern scientific hypothesis.

Miss Morison and Miss Lamont, the psychologist would say, were haunted for the reason that, being of exceptionally romantic, impressionable temperaments, the ideas associated in their minds with the Petit Trianon, appealed to them with such "suggestive" force as to plunge them for the time being into a state of "psychical dissociation," during which their sub-consciousness obtained complete control over the upper consciousness, and flooded them with its latent memories of all that they had ever read or heard about the place and its historic residents. In other words, they were as two persons "dreaming awake."

Nor do we need to depart from the law of sub-conscious perception and memory to explain hauntings of the type represented by the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns and the life-saving ghost of the Boston hotel. It is to-day a well-established fact that some diseases, in their earlier stages, occasionally reveal their presence by symbolic dreams caused by the physical sensations involved in the progress of the disease—sensations so slight that they are usually unnoticed in the waking state, when they have to compete with a mass of external sensations. Sometimes, in such cases, one has a dream of a rat gnawing at the part affected, sometimes of a ghostly figure warning the sufferer to prepare for death. Or, in a moment of waking "dissociation," the victim may have a vivid hallucination based like the dreams on the sub-consciously perceived sensations but taking the form of an appalling phantasm—a White Lady, for instance.

So, likewise, the hypothesis of hallucinations based on sub-conscious percepts is all that is needed to explain the ghost seen in the Boston hotel. It is necessary to assume nothing more than that the guest who saw the apparition at the elevator entrance perceived the danger without being aware of it, and sub-consciously developed the hallucination that enabled her to avoid it.