

Will Prof. Hyslop's "Ghost" Reveal the Secret of the Letter in the Safe?



"Somewhere in that hidden safe is the sealed letter whose reading may be the ultimate test of the truth of spiritualism. Will the ghostly hands of Dr. Hyslop open that safe and reveal its message?"

SOMEWHERE in New York, in a carefully locked steel safe, is a letter. What is written on that jealously concealed and guarded bit of paper no living being knows. Even where the safe is, no one knows. That letter was written, sealed and locked by Professor James Hervey Hyslop, one of the greatest scientific investigators of psychic phenomena that the world has known. Professor Hyslop died on June 17, 1920, at Upper Montclair, N. J., without having revealed the safe's whereabouts.

But like his friends, William James, Richard Hodgson and Hugo Munsterberg, Doctor Hyslop had promised to whisper across the void between our world and the world of the dead as soon after his death as he was able to establish communication with the living. That he failed to reveal where the safe is containing his letter was because, those of his friends who know the circumstances believe, Dr. Hyslop wanted the message to be an absolute test of his identity if he were able so to communicate. Obviously, with no living person knowing where the letter was concealed, there could be no charges made afterward that the envelope had been secretly opened, the communication read and his message after death "faked."

Beside that letter probably are those written by Professors James and Munsterberg. Among all the messages, pretended or real, which spiritualistic mediums claim to have received from these two, none ever mentioned these letters. Complete failure of the test has been registered in their cases.

Will Doctor Hyslop succeed where they, if they are living in that other world, failed or forgot?

Will any of the dead scientist's friends and fellow investigators receive a message from the late Doctor Hyslop revealing the hiding place of the letter and its contents? If so, if any living being is enabled by such a communication to do this and if the message received conforms word for word to the letter when opened, it must be regarded as incontrovertible proof that we live after death has overtaken the body and that so living are able to communicate with those we have left behind on earth.

It has been more than a dozen years since a few fellow investigators and friends of the late scientist met at Dr. Hyslop's summer home in the Adirondacks for the purpose of establishing a test that would seem to prove conclusively the survival of the spirit after death and the possibility

of communication between the dead and the living. Each of those present wrote a note, taking all precautions to conceal the contents from the others. The notes were sealed and given to Dr. Hyslop to hide. No one of those who wrote the notes knew what the others had written and no one but Dr. Hyslop was to know where the notes were hidden. It is not known now, even, who all the other members of the little group were. The secret perished with Dr. Hyslop.

The agreement was that after each member of the group had died he was to try to communicate from the unknown world the contents of the note he had written.

Of the absolute sincerity of this test there can be no doubt. It was solemnly agreed that none of the letters should be tampered with or unsealed until a message should be received which should reveal their contents. Dr. Hyslop's reputation was such as to provide an iron clad guaranty of his own conduct. He seldom discussed the matter, and only once, when he let slip the word "safe," did he give any hint as to the whereabouts of the letters.

The test was guarded against all fraud or even what is called "suggestion" by Dr. Hyslop's scientifically thorough precautions. The usual method would be to seal such a letter and leave it in some spot known to at least one other person. But by keeping even the whereabouts of the letter unknown, Dr. Hyslop has provided a more difficult test than any before attempted, and one that would prove absolutely conclusive, he obviously considered, if successfully met.

Even Dr. Walter F. Prince, acting director of research of the American Society for Psychical Research, on whom Dr. Hyslop's mantle may be said to have fallen, asserts his absolute ignorance of the details of the test. And if any living being shares Dr. Hyslop's secret, Dr. Prince would be the man.

"I do not know where the letters are hidden," he says, "nor do I know what is in them. Nor do I know who wrote them. I do not even know whether they exist at this moment."

Already the death of the distinguished psychic investigator has stirred the imaginations of dozens of spiritualistic mediums. From various sources come pretended conversations and messages from the late Dr. Hyslop. The society whose leading light he was has undertaken the investigation of some of these alleged com-

munications. Some have been cast aside as being obviously false; others Dr. Prince considers worthy of exhaustive investigation.

But among all these pretended communications no medium has yet had the courage to say that he can reveal the secret of the letter in the safe!

The first of the pretended messages is said to have been received by a medium living in the upper part of New York City within a short time of Dr. Hyslop's death and several hours before the fact of his death had become generally known. The communication, which was transmitted by the medium to one of the society's investigators, said that when Dr. Hyslop reached the other side he was in a very weak condition, fatigued by his unusual journey, and pictured him as having been ministered to by Professor James. It is claimed that it would have been practically impossible for the medium to have learned of Dr. Hyslop's death except by psychic means at the time this alleged communication was received. Some of the society's investigators attribute this seeming miracle to telepathy or clairvoyance.

This first message was followed by a series of communications on the day following Dr. Hyslop's death, through another medium, to the effect that the Doctor got across the void without any trouble whatever, landed on the other shore strong and vigorous—so strong and vigorous that he was able to communicate with this world within a few moments after his death. While this is taken by some investigators to tend toward establishing the authenticity of the first communication, others point out that the messages contradict themselves.

Mrs. C. G. Sanders, who says she is a psychic for the society, asserts that messages have come continuously since noon of the day of Dr. Hyslop's death. Miss Tabby, in charge of the New York office of the society, will not admit that any one connected with the organization has heard from Dr. Hyslop since his death. No official report has yet been issued.

But a Toronto psychic, Dr. Albert Durrant Watson, has given out the text of what he declares is a message from Dr. Hyslop, received on the third day after his death. If Dr. Watson has actually heard from Dr. Hyslop, and the American psychics have not, then Canada has scored a psychic "scoop" of no mean dimensions.

Dr. Watson, his medium, Louis Benjamin, and a Toronto banker came to New York at the invitation of a prominent composer who had witnessed a seance of theirs in Toronto. They arrived two days after Dr. Hyslop's death and held two seances. On both occasions, it is claimed, twenty or more persons of some prominence were present.

A Remarkable Painting by Raphael Sebastino, "There Is No Death." The Painting Was the Artist's Picture of a Spiritualistic Seance Carried on Under Scientific Auspices, in Which, It Was Claimed, Another Body "Materialized" from the Medium. Dr. Hyslop, Who Was One of the Scientists Attending, Is Seen as the Last Figure Among the Spectators.

How the Whole Spiritualistic World Is Waiting for the Message from Behind the Grave Which He Faithfully Promised to Send

Benjamin, going into his trance, closed his eyes, took a few deep breaths, and, it is said, announced that he was in communication with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the English poet, and later, with Professor William James, Abraham Lincoln and Plato. Coleridge is said to have announced:

"There is a prominent man among us who arrived only a few days ago. He is Dr. James Hervey Hyslop and desires to give a message to his friends. He requests that his friends on earth publish it for him."

Then, at Benjamin's dictation, Dr. Watson wrote a long message from Hyslop beginning: "I, James Hervey Hyslop, am sending now a short communication from the new world, where I find myself functioning as an entity, a person, an individual, one who has retained sufficient physical replica characteristics to be assured that survival is a fact, and that the continuity of individual existence is as true as the fact that he once lived in a physical world and was known as James Hervey Hyslop."

Dr. Hyslop did not lose a certain form of consciousness during the death experience, the message continued, and he denied that there was any symptom of suffering in the process of death. He had been asked for he said, when he reached the other side—"by old friends—delicacy prohibits the mention of their names—A strange sense of delicacy, and one quite at variance with what might have been expected of Dr. Hyslop when engaged in an enterprise of this importance, say those who knew the great physicist in life."

The communication went on to say that an organization of scientists, psychologists, philosophers and teachers in the other world, "knowing that contact with other worlds has been established and is now as actual as wireless telegraphy and telephony, have decided almost at once to bridge the gulf and give scientific evidence of the authenticity of spirit communication."

The message concluded with the statement that Sir William Crookes, the famous English scientist, has been very busy during his sojourn beyond the grave and has perfected a machine which will record thought waves from the other world, all of which can be easily read by living people and will presumably take the place of human mediums. Professor Crookes, the "message" went on, would soon reveal the secret of this mechanism to a living inventor; but by just what method was not made clear.

As has been said, Professor James, Dr. Hodgson, Professor Munsterberg and others promised to communicate with the living when they had reached the other world. In 1911, the year after James' death, Dr. Hyslop received a supposed communication from the great Harvard psychologist

The Late Dr. Hyslop, the Foremost of Scientific

Investigators of Spiritualistic Phenomena, and Below Him a Flashlight of a Seance Which Revealed a Triumph, as Shown, Suspended in the Air by, Apparently, No Visible Means.

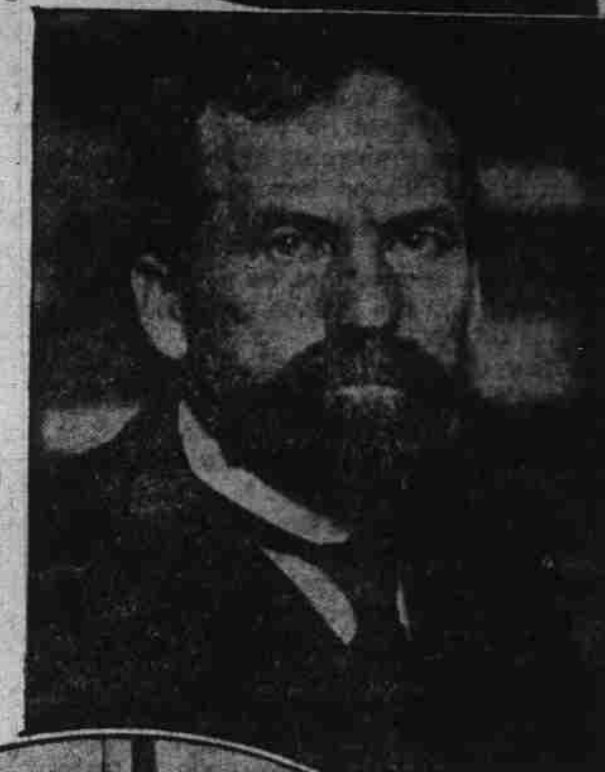
and philosopher through the medium of a fifteen-year-old boy, the son of a well known clergyman, and later more messages were sent through Mrs. Chenoweth and Mrs. Snead, Boston mediums. At first Dr. Hyslop believed these messages authentic, but later he was quoted as having convinced himself that they were false.

At another time a Miss Gaule got a message or two from Hodgson in which Hodgson said he had seen James, then lecturing in England, in pink pajamas. Dr. Hyslop wrote James asking for verification of this important communication, and James replied that he had in fact donned the fancy night dress during an emergency.

Munsterberg is also said to have been heard from on several occasions. But there has been nothing very conclusive about these communications, nothing so "evidential" as psychists term it, that the case for spiritual communication has been proved to the satisfaction of impartial investigators.

Dr. Hyslop's explanation of the inconclusiveness of these tests, and of the incoherency of the messages in general was interesting. He believed that the spirit carries with it the same characteristics, weaknesses and virtues that it possessed at the moment of death. He thought that with the passing of time a spirit might forget mundane matters much as it might have forgotten them if still alive.

Furthermore, spirits were not very well able to control the thoughts that they passed on to mediums, he claimed. In the mind of a living person many thoughts are born and held without being expressed. The faculty that prevents their expression in words is called inhibition, and this fac-



ulty of inhibition, Dr. Hyslop held, was one not present in the makeup of spirits. Therefore, they sent to their mediums on this earth pretty much whatever was passing through their spiritual minds at the time, and this naturally would be incoherent.

Add to this the inhibitions of the medium—the process of selecting certain thoughts for translation and the repressing of others—and the details for which telepathy is held responsible, and it is quite logical that the spiritualistic messages should be vague and sometimes difficult to provide with a meaning, he asserted.

But Dr. Hyslop knew that the supreme test—that of the hidden letters—had not been met by his predecessors in the journey to the great beyond. And he was convinced that by this test the existence of spirits could be proved beyond cavil. So it is difficult to believe that he would forget the location of the letters, or the sense, if not the wording of what he had written.

The earnestness, sincerity and ability of Dr. Hyslop are not to be doubted. He gave up the best years of his life to investigation of psychical phenomena, braving ridicule and disbelief heroically. Will he appear to some old friend, or to some medium peculiarly sensitive to the psychic waves? Will he make known the exact location of the safe and describe the contents of his letter? Will he, in company with his fellow scientists and deliver into the depths of the unknown, point the way to a constant, easy, accurate communication with those who have gone before and rob death of all the mystery and fear with which it has been shrouded since man has known it?