

THE HESPERUS-ADDITOR.

SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND OR SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE. WHICH IS IT?
THAT'S THE QUESTION.

Herr Florizel von Reuter is a musician of European fame, and one of the greatest German virtuosos upon the violin. He is a man of many accomplishments, which seem to include both the psychic temperament and the power of writing a clear and arresting statement.

His story speaks for itself. Whether the very remarkable results obtained were, as would appear, independent messages, or whether they were the products of a dramatisation of his own subconscious powers, presents a problem to the researcher.

I may add that Herr von Reuter has kindly sent me a specimen of his "Hesperus," and that it is at the disposal of any psychic whom the College may recommend as proficient at planchette work.

—A. Conan Doyle.

Controversy waxes high, at the present time, as to the truth of Spiritualism, and in this article I am about to add another spoke to the wheel of investigation. Up to a few months ago I was as ignorant on this subject as are all persons who have never devoted any especial energy to the study of the psychic. At the time I speak of, I was staying in a small village in the heart of the great forest of the Mark-Brandenburg, Germany, a village of twelve hundred inhabitants, as mediæval in character as if a relic of the sixteenth century. I was a guest in the Castle of the Count of the district, an enormous pile, parts of which were built in the eleventh century.

Sauntering through the gateway of the courtyard one day for a stroll in the cobble-stoned streets of the village, I discovered a small ancient apothecary-shop, a little old world "Apotheke," where medicines are the only commodity. Entering, out of curiosity, I found the "Apotheker" seated behind his rough board counter engrossed in devouring—not a chicken and lettuce sandwich—but a book on psychical subjects. Asking him—as a pretext—for an English prescription which I knew he would not have, I proceeded to question him about his reading.

"It is a new study with me," he responded in a broad North German dialect. "But my wife recently became the possessor of a psychical apparatus that gives such remarkable messages, that I feel impelled to study up the subject."

The things this quaint little man proceeded to tell me about this apparatus so aroused my curiosity that I asked to be allowed to see it.

He then escorted me into a stuffy little sitting-room adjoining the shop and produced a board of polished wood about twelve inches long by five wide. Along the upper half of the long side of this board the alphabet was printed, in addition to numerals up to ten. With this simple board went a peculiar little round hollow box with a pointer protruding from it.

According to the Apothecary, if one puts this box, hollow side down on the lower half of the board, turning the pointer towards the letters, and then placed the tips of one's finger on the smooth top, the box would soon begin to move automatically, and messages of the most complicated character would be forthcoming. "Oh, yes," I thought, sceptically, "Just another kind of ouija-board or planchette."

But upon taking up the hollow box and reading the explanatory text which was pasted about its body, I soon perceived that it really had a much deeper significance than anything connected with the well-known ouija-board, the box being in fact, an "Od-Collector." Now, as everyone who has made any scientific study of psychic psychology knows, there exists a mysterious force in every human body—with some persons, in small, in others large quantities—a force which Reichenbach christened "Od." This "Od" is an electro-magnetic current which exudes from the finger and toe tips, persons possessing an abnormal store of it being supposed to be what is called "psychic."

These facts I already knew from reading the works of Reichenbach. A closer examination of this little Od-Collector showed me that it was governed by the same principle as the "cabinet," which psychics claim is indispensable for the purpose of concentrating the Od and Ectoplasma exuding from their bodies, forces which are necessary for their so-called materialisations and physical phenomena. The board was called the Additor (Italian for "Indicating with the finger"), while the mysterious box was christened Hesperus (evening star).

The inventor made such a remarkable claim for this mystical pair—the Hesperus and its accompanying board, the Additor—calling it the most authentic bridge between the Earth and the Hereafter, that against my own instincts I began to take an interest in the apparatus.

I have never been interested, even superficially in the ouija-board. Its little easily moved three-legged table that jumps about over the big board encircling letter after letter has always seemed to me much more likely to be guided unintentionally by the operator than by any spirit force.

But this Hesperus idea appealed to me. The finger-tips pressing lightly on the top of the receiver; the electro-magnetic force flowing into the dark space of the hollow box; the *concentrated* force propelling the box; there was something *logical*, scientific about this consequential result that gripped my common-sense.

The *force* collected, there would be needed only an invisible intelligence to guide the box with its little black pointer, and something definite might be attained.

Returning to the Castle, I could not get the idea of this minute "Cabinet" out of my thoughts, and eventually decided no harm could come of investigating further. I discovered that the village where the inventor of this "automatic medium" lived was but an hour's automobile drive from the Castle. Investigating still further, I found him, a poor old scientist who had invented other things and been awarded several gold medals in different countries for inventions.

From him, I purchased an "additor" with its little Od-Collector, the Hesperus, and my investigations commenced.

Since then I have been in a confused state of mind, mystified, one day convinced; the next sceptical again. The following questions arise in my mind: "What is it?" "By what force is it guided?" "Is it actual?" "Is it controlled by spiritual beings which surround us and are at all times anxious to communicate with the world they have bodily left, or are in reality the guardian spirits which our mothers taught us were always watching over us, interested in our welfare, protecting us from evil?" or, "Are the beings it seems to put us in contact with merely the concoctions of a fantastic sub-conscious mind; the remarkable conversations nothing but romances of the finger-tips of the operator, romances which introduce us to famous people of the past; give us in nine or ten languages, advice, warnings, messages from different persons (each endowed with a separate personality permeating its entire conversation) concoct wise maxims, witty epigrams, aphorisms; deliver soulful monologues, or invective-emphasized jobations.

Most people make attempts with such instruments solely in order to reach their departed relatives and friends, and it is true that when our friends come in and place their finger-tips on the Hesperus, they are disappointed if they do not within a few minutes, get a communication from Uncle George or Aunt Sally telling them what steps to take to make a fortune in a week, and if inside of half an hour their own fathers or mothers have not announced themselves, they are likely to condemn the "Additor" as a fraud.

Our experience is along an entirely different line.

I say "our," as my mother and myself get our best results when alone. Still no known relatives have ever got "on the line," as it were, and only thrice in our experience has any friend of the past announced himself.

Our conversations come from all countries, and have been written in nine different languages up to the present. One can never have the slightest idea what will turn up next.

But to be more explicit.

At first we had only failure; day after day we tried to get the little Hesperus to move, and nothing happened. It seemed as if our bodies were entirely devoid of that mysterious force from which mediumistic phenomena emanate, so that we could not charge the little box. We were almost ready to throw the whole apparatus away, when suddenly things began to happen.

It was evening, and I was playing the violin alone with my mother in our private salon in the castle.

Incidentally I must explain that I am a concert violinist by profession, only superficially known in America, but very well in Europe.

As I was walking up and down playing an extremely beautiful double-step passage from a classical Sonata, the little box suddenly began to move under my mother's finger tips, we having decided to try it once more before condemning it to oblivion.

Slowly at first, then with increasing rapidity, the Hesperus floated from one end of the board to the other, stopping at different letters en route; my mother being conscious of a peculiar impelling force which caused the box to glide and to stop, although her finger-tips were barely touching it. On it went, from letter to letter, so fast that I—who had thrown the violin on a sofa, and was engaged in jotting down the letters—could hardly write fast enough, my mother having closed her eyes to avoid any unconscious influencing of the Hesperus.

But the letters I took down seemed a meaningless conglomeration, a senseless chaos. After faithfully transcribing about a hundred letters, I grew impatient and spoke to the apparatus. "Is that a language I know?" The Hesperus glided to the word "Yes." ("Ja," on the board.)

"Is it English?"—back went the Hesperus to "Nein." (No.)

"Is it German?"—"Yes."

"Are the letters taken down correctly?"

"Mostly," replied the board (at last, a properly spelled German word).

After this the mysterious writing continued for some time, the Hesperus indicating the letters so rapidly that I could hardly write them down.

Then suddenly it ceased, and refused to move again. Evidently the contact with whatever had been writing had been severed.

For students of cryptology I append a copy of the text as I had taken it down.

h c i e z t u h c s h c i e n o h
 c s h c i e t h c a b o e b h c i e n r a
 w h c i e t a r h c i e h c a w n e b i e
 s n e t h c i l f p e b a h h c i, etc., etc.

This was the first part of the message which we set ourselves to decipher.

We tried every second letter, every third letter, and so on, but no result was forthcoming.

Finally, when almost discouraged, I happened to remember having read in a book written by Dr. Du Prel, the celebrated investigator of occult problems, that spirit-writings have been known to be given inverted. So we decided to try inverting the whole message, beginning at the end and working back.

We soon perceived that we were on the right track at last, as words became distinguishable. The beginning of the communication as we finally deciphered it was as follows, translated from the German:—

“ I guard, I protect, I observe, I warn, I advise, I watch. Seven duties have I.”

The inversion in German as we first made it out reads thus:—

“ Ich habe pflichten sieben wache ich rate ich warne ich beobachte ich schone ich schutze ich.”

This sentence must be in its turn read backwards, beginning at the end we get the sense as I first gave it. The translation into English shows the reader that a “ guardian spirit ” is trying to establish its identity by presenting its credentials.

The message went on to speak of some matters of a private nature concerning a concert tour in Roumania which I had just terminated, a person being mentioned by name of whose existence my mother—whose fingers were on the box—was ignorant, even the name of the city in which this person lived being given.

The message ended with:—“ I will come again another time. Remember I love you and guard you.”

This was the first of many communications of this kind which we received (and are receiving) from this mysterious watching intelligence, every message being inverted as was the first.

Finally we felt quite well acquainted with the writer, and would ask advice upon various subjects. The answers always came promptly without a moment's hesitation, and, when deciphered, were always terse and to the point, the advice given being invariably lucid and logical.

It advised against forming certain acquaintanceships, gave me advice about my concerts, programmes, etc., indicating its displeasure if I failed to retire at a reasonable hour, even one evening having the kindness to give me suggestions about my violin practice.

Once we asked it if the writer had been German while upon Earth. The answer came:—“ Never shouldst thou ask me who I am or what, but thou mayst call me E—.” There followed a Greek female name, which out of respect for the feelings of the

governing intelligence I refrain from giving. The writer further wrote that upon Earth she had been Latin and Catholic.

Later examining the Catholic Encyclopeædia, we discovered that a person of the name given, a Latin and Catholic, had existed about 470 A.D. She had resided in Alexandria, and after being persecuted at home to contract an undesirable marriage, had fled in man's attire and taken refuge in a monastery, where, taking the vows of a monk she had served for thirty-eight years, her sex never having been revealed until her death. She is now a canonized Saint in both Latin and Greek churches.

After we had had about a dozen conversations with the "Saint" of the inverted writing, our circle of "spirit" acquaintances began to increase.

The next "intelligences" to present themselves were two French-speaking ones, who came one after the other and addressed me tenderly and affectionately as "mon cher ami" or "mon cher garçon."

My reason for knowing there were two is that after the first one had ceremoniously wished us "bonne nuit," saying he would come again, the second one immediately began to write, saying he was a close friend, in fact, a colleague of the first.

This second French "spirit" (I call him "spirit" for the sake of brevity) was of a humorous nature, of a perfectly different personality.

He would occasionally indicate a wrong letter, then would add: "excuse moi, je suis stupide, n'est-ce pas." Once he wrote:—"Can you hear me laughing?" I answered, "It is very consoling to learn that you laugh on the other side," whereupon he replied cheerfully:—"Why not?" He then went on to describe his personal appearance, saying he is very handsome with "much hair like you have." Finally he even gave away that he was a celebrated musician by admitting that he is always much pleased when I play his compositions. He also wrote:—"I speak other languages, can you not guess who I am?" But when I started guessing, he avoided the issue by writing:—"Not this evening, I must go, because my 'colleague' is tired waiting," by which admission he establishes, No. 1, as also a musician. The personalities of these two "immortals" were so vivid that one has a mental picture of them sauntering off from our "wireless station" arm in arm, discussing pleasantly their chat with their earthly colleague.

Since that first time, they are among our most frequent "spirit" visitors, one of them usually writing in Italian (sometimes inverted), the other sticking faithfully to French. They have an aphorism (each in his own language) to fit every case and problem we discuss, their conversation being a perpetual fount of humour, sarcasm and wit.

Shortly after we made their acquaintance, another interesting personality introduced himself to us in the person of an old Spanish ancestor of ours (one of whose existence we were naturally ignorant, although we were aware that my mother's father came from the French-Spanish frontier). This ancestor presented himself as "Don Mighuel de Hadiz, a knight of Spain, formerly inhabiting an estate near Zaragassa."

In the course of a number of conversations we have had with him, we have gleaned a good many facts about his life, which seems to have been an adventurous one. In one of his messages, he wrote:—"I was in Leipzig, and I visited Sebastian Bach in 1736. Interesting friend, because I also played the violin, my sister, the beautiful Estrellita, played harpsichord. Later, tired of the world, I entered a monastery outside of Zaragassoa, where I was called, "Brother Aloiysius," thy ancestor. Another time more. There is much to tell. Good-night. God bless thee."

On other occasions he has told us of a trip to England, where he was a court favourite at the time of William and Mary; of a visit to France in 1750, where he heard the two old French violinists, Lully and Constantin; of a journey to Italy, whither he travelled in a carriage drawn by six horses over very rough roads. While there he heard Tartini play the violin, and was very enthusiastic about it.

"Don Mighuel" (in spite of having finished his life as Brother Aloiysius) is still essentially the Spanish cavalier, his conversation overflows with polite phrases and compliments to the ladies whenever he favours us with a visit in the presence of lady friends of ours. He has described his appearance as well as apparel, and has, in truth, a personality distinctly his own.

All of his communications are written in the most aristocratic and perfect Spanish, which I luckily understand sufficiently to be able to take down correctly.

We find our knowledge of various foreign languages very useful when conversing with *various* "immortals." Up to date we have had to transcribe messages in English (forward and backward), French, Spanish, German (forward and backward), Italian (forward and backward), Swedish (both ways), Latin, Hungarian and Russian, as well as a little Polish.

Once a whole page of Latin (which I'm ashamed to confess we do *not* know) was written which we were at our wit's end to decipher, until "Brother Aloiysius" most obligingly turned up and kindly offered to translate, which he did in very excellent *almost* correct German.

But we met our Waterloo on two occasions, once when an old Russian Priest, who according to his own statement passed on in 1842, and who gave his name as Pater Stanislow of Novgorod, tried to carry on a conversation with us in Russian. Eventually we succeeded in taking down a number of sentences, after which he tried us in Latin, also with indifferent success. As these were apparently the only languages at his disposal, the poor old dear was forced to bless us in Latin and take his departure.

The second "Waterloo" was when a "spirit" calling itself the famous violinist Ernst (1814-1865) delivered a message in Hungarian (of which neither my mother nor I know a word). Being aware that Ernst must have understood German, we were able to communicate with him, while taking down a language that was worse than Greek to me. At the end of the communication, he wrote in German that he had used Hungarian as a test.

Upon taking the message to a Hungarian friend, we ascertained that the sentences were correct in every detail.

Recently we were asked by an English soldier who fell in the World's War to give a message to his former sweetheart, whose name and address he gave in full. This message is so beautiful that I cannot refrain from quoting it verbatim.

"Tell her I was shot before I could write the letter to tell I loved her. She is not to blame the good fellow who shot me. We are chums over here. I talk his gibberish and he talks mine, and we laugh a lot at politicians. His name is Ulrich."

There is something singularly attractive and poetical in the idea that those who, at the command of their respective Governments, must perforce shoot men with whom they have no quarrel, fraternise with the so-called "enemies" as soon as they have passed on into the great Hereafter.

It bears on the doctrine of Christianity in a peculiarly conclusive manner.

The disfavour with which the "Immortals" regard Jazz is strikingly illustrated by the following jobation which was transmitted one evening recently by an "Intelligence" claiming to be that of the great old Italian composer Alessandro Stradello. I quote verbatim:—

Music is the soul of the world.

Music is joy.

Jazz is the voice of the Devil on earth.

Music is the Speech of God, the voice of Nature, pure as mountain snow, put to uses demoniacal, purity polluted, making of the childlike—perversity, of the god-like—earthly, of the angelic—demons.

Saints abhor that which is beloved of polluted blood.

I come from a sphere where no sounds of degradation penetrate. I love all who breathe the pure perfumes of great music. I come through the vibrations of divine music. I float on the waves of soulful melody, which rest the nerves of Earth's pure souls.

The anthems of divine art bring me here to salute my relative in the realms of sound.

Another time a somewhat similar paean to music was transmitted in mirror-writing (*inverted*), which when deciphered, read as follows:—

“ Heart's greatest sign of love that God has given the world. His voice on Earth the vibration of the Infinite, Music—the soul of the spheres, beauty incarnate in sound, purity breathing from the leaves, from the flowers, the perfume of the rose, incarnate melody, God's breath, driving sorrow hence, the heart of all things holy. Ah! that it is so polluted by carnate beings! I come from regions holy, where death never penetrates, no war, no hate, no injustice; only joy. Fear not. After life's work is done, music, perfume, communion with sweet nature. Love divine guarding always. Greetings from the Immortals. I go, but I come again. Blessings follow ye all, my loved Followers. Adieu.”

It required almost half an hour to invert this message, but the letters were correct from beginning to end. A few days later the board vouchsafed the information (in Italian) that this monologue had been written by no less a person than Andrea del Sarto, who by the way had given a message once previously.

Before passing on to the summing up and discussion of the evidence, I will still quote a few of the various aphorisms and epigrams which the Board has transmitted upon different appropriate occasions always in keeping with the topic of conversation.

French.

La blague est toujours populaire.
 Popularitat; c'est la gloire en gros sous.
 La patience est amère, mais son fruit est doux.
 On ne pardonne rien aux grands.
 Rire des grands esprits, c'est le privilège des sots.
 Il ne faut jamais s'occuper des critiques, que pour rire.

Translation.

Humbug is always popular.
 Popularity! It is glory in pennies.
 Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.
 One never pardons great people anything.
 To laugh at great souls is the privilege of fools.
 One should never bother oneself with criticism, except to laugh at it.

Spanish.

Buen principio, la mitad es hecha.
 El corazon manda las carnes.
 El sabio muda consejo, el necio no.

Italian.

Per lo primo colpo, non cade la quercia.
 Chi serve al commune a cattivo padrone.
 Tutti le vie ponno condurre a Roma.
 I birbanti hanno sempre denaro.
 I birbante sono rari i poveri.
 Che cera truova.
 Domandando l'impossibile si ottiene il meglio.
 Chi ha il coraggio di ridere è il padrone del mondo.
 Chi non ha pazienza non ha niente.

German.

Denk, aber sage nicht immer was du denkst.
 Es ist leichter für solche Charlatane die Bach nicht verstehen.
 Schweine haben immer genug zu fressen. Pfu!
 Grosse seelen sind immer bescheiden.

Latin.

Veritas est magna.
 Nisi dominus frustra.
 Nemo solus sapit.
 Omnia vincit labor.
 Crede habes est habes.

and many others that as yet we have not succeeded in translating.

I do not wish to claim novelty for all of these epigrams. Some of them are well known in their respective languages. But what I do regard as remarkable, is the lightning quickness with which the writing intelligence when replying to questions or commenting

Translation.

Well begun is half done.
 The heart commands the flesh.
 The wise accept counsel, the fool never.

Translation.

At the first blow, the oak does not fall.
 He who serves the public has a bad master.
 All roads may lead one to Rome.
 Rascals always have money.
 Rascals are rarely the poverty-stricken.
 He who seeks will find.
 Asking for the impossible one obtains the best.
 He who has courage to laugh is master of the world.
 He who has not patience has nothing.

Translation.

Think, but do not always say what you think.
 It is easier for those charlatans who do not understand Bach.
 Pigs always have enough to eat. Bah!
 Great souls are always modest.

Translation.

Truth is great.
 Without God, one can attain nothing.
 None can be wise unaided.
 Labour conquers everything.
 To believe one has, is to have.

on remarks, is always able to find something suitable for the issue under discussion.

Naturally, every conscientious investigator of psychical problems, feels it his bounden duty never to preclude the possibility of fraud, conscious or unconscious, until the chain of evidence be more or less complete.

In this case, the possibility of conscious fraud may be eliminated. No level-headed, logical person would credit any operator with the ability to write consciously on the spur of the moment pages of *inverted* prose, pages of *inverted* foreign languages, reeling off aphorisms and logical answers to questions propounded at a lightning speed, even if it were possible to attain sufficient dexterity in directing the Hesperus pointer while blindfolded, and with pads of cotton wool carefully placed over the eyes under the bandage, which is the way my mother controls herself when her fingers are on the box. Anyone who has seen the Additor and tried it will immediately dismiss such a hypothesis as baseless, even after weeks of practice.

As I have been present upon every occasion when my mother has had her fingers upon the Hesperus, I of course, know that *conscious* fraud is out of the question, while elimination brings us one step further, in fact, a large step, as in case of a *medium*, it is often difficult to establish test conditions which absolutely preclude conscious fraud.

Having arrived at this point, we are forced to choose between three possibilities, namely: the sub-conscious mind, telepathic communications from living people, or spiritual direction. These questions will be answered according to each separate person's individual belief or outlook upon life.

The materialist, the atheist, the agnostic, and sometimes the average old-fashioned scientist whose vision does not travel farther than the four walls of his own experience, will say without a moment's hesitation, "sub-conscious mind"; the spiritually inclined person (also religiously brought-up persons with an existing belief in the Life everlasting) will accept just as quickly the spiritist hypothesis, while students of psychical research will hesitate between telepathic and spiritist revelation.

While debating these alternatives, I feel, to be just, that one must always propound the following questions:—

1. Is it possible for the sub-conscious mind to photograph upon its lens the position of each letter on the board, thereby making it possible for the operator to manipulate unconsciously the "Hesperus," while blindfolded?

2. Is it possible for the sub-conscious mind to write correctly whole pages of inverted words in different languages, and to frame with lightning rapidity correct and lucid answers to voluntary questions asked by any person present, said answers also being transmitted inverted?

3. Is it possible for the sub-conscious mind to invent personages, endowing each separate person with a name recognisable by its manner of conversing, and also a distinct personality?

4. Is it possible for the sub-conscious mind to write perfectly in languages which the operator only knows superficially, or in a language totally unknown to the operator, (as in the case of Russian and Hungarian), there being also no person in the room conversant with either language?

5. Is it possible for the sub-conscious mind to produce with logical consistency a series of invented personalities capable of replying consistently to any voluntary question put to it by anyone present in any language chosen by the questioner? Also to add little by little to this list of personalities, yet always from time to time conjuring up the original romantic characters, or at will, evolving celebrated personalities out of the past, inventing at the same time adventures for them?

Up to the present, I have not raised the possibility of telepathy from the living, as I regard this as out of the question in the present case. The telepathic hypothesis is, I am convinced, entertainable only in two instances, namely:—Those of the two monologues on music which were transmitted (one backwards) without any previous or subsequent conversation. I do not admit the possibility of *conversations* being carried on telepathically between living persons at great distances from each other, apart from the fact that, in the present cases, the unknown person would have had to be fraudulently claiming the identity of some person already departed from this world, as well as delivering its long distance messages to a blindfolded person.

In my own opinion, it is *less* incredible and *more* logical to accept the theory of spiritual communications, than to admit the existence of a sub-consciousness capable of performing such miraculous things.

Why try to account for everything beyond our own limited cosmic understanding by sub-conscious mind, thereby transforming that mysterious force into a sort of "Jack of all trades," or "Till owl-glass," always at our beck and call, always ready to fool us by playing pranks and tricks? Why not just as well admit the possibility of an *over-conscious* force through which we absorb spiritual inspirations?