

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

VOLUME 55, PART 206, JULY, 1972

GILBERT MURRAY'S LAST EXPERIMENTS

BY PROFESSOR E. R. DODDS

INTRODUCTION

OUR knowledge of Murray's justly celebrated experiments in telepathy has hitherto rested mainly¹ on the following published sources:

(i) The appendix to Mrs A. W. Verrall's 'Report on a Series of Experiments in "Guessing"', *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX. 64 ff. This contains a selection of 116 experiments out of a total of 505 submitted by Murray, dated between the spring of 1910 and the end of 1915. The selection includes virtually all the experiments quoted in the body of Mrs Verrall's paper or in Murray's first Presidential Address to the Society (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX. 46 ff.), but was otherwise, we are told, 'to some extent made at random'. I shall refer to these experiments as series A.

(ii) Mrs Henry Sidgwick's 'Report on Further Experiments in thought-transference carried out by Professor Gilbert Murray, LL.D., Litt.D.', *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV. 212 ff. This contains reports of 140 numbered experiments (43 in the body of the paper, the rest in Appendix I) out of a total of 259 submitted. This selection ranges in date from 1916 to April, 1924, but includes also 8 earlier experiments not quoted by Mrs Verrall. It contains 'almost all the cases counted as successes, and also cases of partial success or of failure which seem to present points of interest'. I shall call this series B.

(iii) Thirteen experiments carried out at Fisher's Hill (the home of Mrs Sidgwick and her brother Lord Balfour) in December 1924, after paper (ii) was in print, but published as Appendix II in the same volume of *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV. 336 ff.

¹ I neglect here such incidental sources as the interesting letter in which Aldous Huxley described the session of December 5th, 1915, at which he successfully acted as principal agent (A. Huxley, *Letters*, p. 86f.).

(iv) Sixteen experiments carried out in May 1931 in the presence of Mr and Mrs Salter and reported by the latter in *Journal*, Vol. XXXII (1941) 29 ff.

(v) Ten further experiments quoted by Murray in his second Presidential Address, delivered in 1952 and published in *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX. 155 ff.

It will be seen that there are large gaps in the published record, and that the period after 1924 is only sparsely represented. The purpose of the present paper is to supplement the exemplary work of Mrs Verrall and Mrs Sidgwick by filling some of the gaps.

In his 1952 Address, after mentioning papers (i) and (ii), Murray wrote: 'I have also several bundles of records of later sessions, though of late years, owing partly to the complete dispersal of my children and the rest of our old group, I have given up the experiments.'¹ Observing this passage, it occurred to me recently to look whether any of these 'bundles' survived in the vast archive of Murray's papers which is now housed in the Bodleian. What I found was a file of neatly typed sheets headed 'Experiments in thought-transference with Professor Gilbert Murray 1920/1946' and accompanied by the original notes scribbled on odd scraps of paper in the course of each session. This series, which I shall call C, contains records of 19 sessions, comprising 128 separate experiments.² There is an overlap in date with series B but no overlap in contents. The only items previously published are the 13 experiments carried out at Fisher's Hill and the 10 quoted by Murray himself. Those reported by Mrs Salter are not included.

Since series A and B are only selections from a larger body of evidence, it seemed desirable to publish the present series in full, failures and all, with the exception of the Fisher's Hill sessions which have already been fully reported by Mrs Sidgwick. Save where otherwise stated, my report reproduces the contents of the typed sheets, which I have checked against the contemporary notes and found to be in all essentials³ a faithful transcript of them, though with occasional expansion for the sake of clarity.

The original records include the date of each session and in all cases but one⁴ the names of the persons present. What they—

¹ *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 162.

² I leave out of account two freak experiments in which Murray acted (unsuccessfully) as *agent* (C 99a and 99b); also experiment 123a, on which see below, p. 399.

³ A few insignificant deviations are recorded in my footnotes.

⁴ The exception is the last session of all, March 1st, 1946, when perhaps only Rosalind and a notetaker (Lady Mary?) were present.

most regrettably—do not include is any statement of the conditions under which the experiments were done. The only exception is the Fisher's Hill sessions, where the conditions were meticulously recorded by Mrs Sidgwick. For the rest we have to rely on two statements by Murray. In his first Presidential Address Murray said:

The method followed is this. I go out of the room and of course out of earshot. Someone in the room, generally my eldest daughter, thinks of a scene or an incident or anything she likes, and says it aloud. It is written down, and I am called. I come in, usually take my daughter's hand, and then, if I have luck, describe in detail what she has thought of. (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 58.)

In his second Address, referring to his later experiments, he said:

The method was always the same. I was sent out of the drawing-room either to the dining-room or to the end of the hall, the door or doors, of course, being shut. The others remained in the drawing-room: someone chose a subject, which was hastily written down, word for word. Then I was called in, and my words written down. (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 163f.)

The second statement omits to mention that the target subject was spoken aloud as well as written down, but there is no doubt that this continued to be the standard practice (certain exceptions will be considered later). It also omits to mention the hand-holding which had been a usual though not invariable feature of the earlier experiments. It appears that this too continued to be practised, at least on some occasions, since at the session of 17 November 1924, C 39 is noted as an exception ('No hands taken'). But where Murray got a correct impression 'at once' or 'on entering the room' or 'while still in the hall' (as in C 29, 30, 36, 47, 50, 91) hand-holding is clearly excluded. The point has no great practical importance, since (as Mrs Verrall observed)¹ in experiments of this kind, involving a succession of multiple choices from an almost boundless field, unconscious muscular pressure could give very little positive guidance.

In the records which follow, words in italics were spoken by one of the company (usually the 'principal agent'²) after Murray's return to the room. Words in round brackets are the notetaker's

¹ *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 65ff. Cf. also Mrs Sidgwick, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 226.

² The whole company were supposed to act as agents, but I use the term 'principal agent' (abbreviated 'p/a') to describe the person who announced the target subject (usually though not invariably selected by himself), and whose hand Murray took on returning to the room.

explanatory additions; those in angled brackets were added for the sake of clarity by the transcriber; those in square brackets are mine, as are the footnotes. A query in square brackets indicates a doubtful reading in the original notes, which are often difficult and occasionally impossible to decipher, having been hurriedly scribbled in pencil.

'GM' stands for Gilbert Murray; 'MM' for his wife, Lady Mary Murray. Rosalind (Mrs Arnold Toynbee) and Agnes are his daughters, Basil and Stephen his sons; Pamela Murray (Mrs Peter Henderson) and Philip and Tony Toynbee are his grandchildren. Aline, Pauline, Phyllis and Francis are connections by marriage.

The place of meeting is seldom stated in the records, but in the absence of any statement to the contrary we can safely assume it to be Yatscombe, the Murrays' house on Boar's Hill, outside Oxford.

THE RECORDS

I. Sunday evening, May 30th, 1920.

Present: Rosalind, MM, Arnold [Toynbee], Nursie, Miss J. Blomfield (notetaker).

1. *Rosalind.* Marsh and Kerenski travelling down from Scapa. *GM.* I think it is Admiral Marsh travelling with Kerenski—travelling down from Scotland.
2. *Rosalind* (not saying or writing it down). The racing in 'The Irish R.M.'. *GM.* Archer at the séance [?]*—no good.*
3. *Rosalind.* Grandmother sitting on a merry-go-round that plays on Kew Bridge. *GM.* That's very funny. It's something I had almost forgotten. It's you and Denis in fits of laughter—your old joke about Grandmother sitting on the Highway Board. She's on a merry-go-round—can't get the place, should say it's somewhere in the Lakes.
(Nearly 20 years ago there had been a great joke between Rosalind and Denis about their grandmother sitting on the Highway Board.)
4. *Rosalind.* Julian Sorel trying to deal with the ladder outside a lady's window. (In a book.)¹ *GM.* This is a book and rather pretentious—French book. Oh, I know what it is—a scene you once told me about—a

¹ The brackets indicate that the words within them were not spoken by Rosalind. The book is Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*.

young man stole into a lady's window and they did not know what to do with the ladder.

II. May 31st, 1920.

Present: Rosalind, MM, Mr Lewis, Nursie, Miss J. Blomfield (notetaker).

5. *Rosalind.* The people at the ford giving Dad strong tea when he was lost in the bush.

GM. I should say it was Australian. It's something to do with the time when I got lost in the Bush at Southey's [school]. Is it the people who gave me tea?

6. *Rosalind.* Thinking of a scene in Zola of the German artillery driving through a village.

GM. Is it Italian? No, can't get it.

7. *Rosalind.* I'll think of Jean [blank] trying to get a lodging and nobody taking him in.

GM. No. Vague feeling of somebody looking for a house—David Balfour. . . .

8. *Rosalind.* Cleopatra's needle being tugged along across the sea.

GM. Got a sort of splashing feeling—not the Boat-race and not the Bradford ship (the educational Bradford ship talked of during the evening). It's rather like the Bradford ship dragging something behind—educational—a ship dragging something long and heavy. I'm clear about the thing. Oh, didn't a ship bring Cleopatra's needle, dragging it behind it?

9. *Rosalind.* The French priest saying prayers for the souls the German cannon was killing.

GM. This is something to do with the war? (*Yes.*) I should say it was a priest praying for the souls of people. (*Rosalind. Any more particulars? Place?*) In France. I get a certain impression of the people being mixed. (*Rosalind. Where is he?* I thought I got him in Rheims.

(Rosalind had thought of scene in a war-diary where the Germans had captured a priest and made him watch them firing their gun, and he prayed for the souls of the people it was killing.)

III. August 1st, 1920.

Present: Rosalind, MM (notetaker), Mr and Mrs Anderson, Arnold Toynbee, Nursie, Basil, Stephen, K. Chapman, Donna Santa Borghesi.

10. *Rosalind.* I think of Petya in 'War and Peace' sitting on the gate before he was killed.

GM. I think this is Russian, but perhaps that is because of

Donna Santa. Oh, it is—I forget his name—it's the boy in 'War and Peace'. I think it's in the battle, when¹ he falls off his horse and finds people trying to kill him. . . . Just got the battle.

(Mixed up: it was Nikolai <who> fell off the horse.)

11. *Rosalind*. I think of the scene in 'The Three Musketeers', at the beginning where d'Artagnan quarrels with <the> unknown man.

GM. No, I don't think I shall get anything.

12. *Rosalind*. I think of St Paul and the other man in prison and the fetters falling off.

GM. This feels totally different. Well, you've never given me anything like this before. I should say it was St Paul. But I do not get any words²—not a quotation. I think he's being tried or condemned. I think he's a prisoner somehow. No, I can't get it clear. Is he escaping from prison?

13. *Rosalind*. The beginning of 'The Pilgrim's Progress', coming to the Slough of Despond.

GM. No, I don't get anything.

14. *Rosalind*. I think of the scene in 'Sense and Sensibility' when the girl sprains her ankle on the hill.

GM. No.

(Rosalind says she felt the crowd badly.)³

15. *Basil*. I'll think of Hawker falling into the Atlantic and being picked up by a tramp steamer.

GM. Somebody falling into the sea with a splash. I think it's an aeroplane falling into the sea. Then⁴ I should think it was the man who tried to come from America—don't remember his name.

16. *Basil*. I'm thinking of Lenin conducting a séance in which he receives hints from Robespierre <about> how to conduct a terror.

GM. I think this is an absurd one, isn't it? Concocted? I think I'll get it. I think it's somebody at a séance getting some horrible, diabolic advice—I don't think I can get more. I get the impression of Lenin being advised by Robespierre.

17. *Basil*. I'm thinking of young Pliny staying at home and seeing his uncle going out to examine the eruption of Vesuvius, where he died, and wondering if he'd come back.

¹ 'when' contemporary notes; transcript has 'Then'.

² So the contemporary notes; transcript omits this sentence.

³ The company was larger than usual—ten persons, including four 'strangers'.

⁴ What follows, though correct, seems to be presented as an inference.

GM. I should think this was a letter of Pliny's in which he describes the eruption. . . . I should say it was the earlier part when he's anxious about his uncle. (*Basil. I was thinking about the letter.*¹)

18. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Robert Dodsley, publisher, in his young days, standing at a table waiting and listening to Pope etc. and deciding to be a poet.

GM. I don't think—a quotation. (Several people had wanted that.)

19. *Basil.* I'll think of the last verse of Gray's 'Elegy'.

GM. 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.' Part of the Elegy—the young man who has the epitaph. I should say it was the omitted verse.²

20. *Basil.* I'm thinking of a scene in Mason's 'Villa Rose' where . . . etc.

GM. I don't think I'll get it.

21. *Basil* (taking down a volume of Ibsen from the shelf). I'm thinking of a sentence from Ibsen, 'If it were only the lack of understanding, with a little patience one could manage to wait for that a while yet.'

GM. A quotation, don't know what it's from, not poetry. I believe it's something in that book (pointing).³ Is that a Conrad? It's something about being able to endure a little longer, if it wasn't for some sort of failure or foolishness, lack of understanding—'if it wasn't for a lack of understanding'. No colour, no quality. Isn't it Ibsen? No.

22. *Mr Anderson.* I'm thinking of Ananias being detected in a lie by St Paul.

GM. No. Somebody being rescued at sea?

23. *MM.* I'm thinking of a whole lot of doctors—physiologists—standing round and trying to do something with him (Gilbert).

GM. I'm sure this isn't right. I'm only thinking of one of the paintings in the Hotel de Ville in Paris—a group of scientific men and doctors in frock coats, round some sort of allegorical subject.

(Probably Claude Bernard.)

IV. December 8th, 1920. Yatscombe.

Present: Agnes, Basil, D. Buxton, C. M. Bowra, Francis, MM.

¹ Pliny, *Letters* VI, 16.

² Murray identifies the poem by quoting the familiar first line. He then goes on to refer, correctly, to the epitaph which concludes the poem, but is wrong in guessing the target to be 'the omitted verse'.

³ Presumably the book was still in Basil's hands or on the table at this point.

24. *Agnes*. I think of that little Russian baroness walking through a village with streams of prisoners and having to pay 1000 roubles for a little cart for the wounded.

GM. Grotesque? I feel as if it were a sort of Russian woman—a Russian countess as something grotesque—lots and lots of dogs?

25. *Agnes*. I think of Abraham Lincoln sitting in a hammock in California talking to Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford, smoking a long pipe.

GM. Grotesque too. Oh, it's a sort of disgusting cinema thing—American. I don't think a cinema. I think Charlie Chaplin and some cinema star—a woman—and they're talking to some very distinguished person—Mr Wilson?—I should say it was talking to Uncle Sam or to some lean, tall, grey American.

26. *Agnes*. I think of Constantine¹ dining in a little restaurant in <the> Quartier Latin and waiting for <the> result of <the> Plebiscite.

GM. I don't think I get anything. Toing and froing—this year, something? No.

27. *Agnes*. Alphonse Daudet sitting in a very ramshackle old windmill in the Balearic Islands, high wind, ships blowing in.

GM. No. (Noise.) Somebody in a sort of ruined house looking at the sea. Not a ruined house but more like a kind of loose tumbledown kind of place.

V. *Sunday, October 26th, 1924.*

Present: MM, [John] Allen, Kenneth Edwards, Miss J. Blomfield (notetaker).

28. *MM*. I think of Mr Benes running out of the hall of the hotel, going out to a dinner party, very quick and with a smile.

GM. This is an Assembly² sort of thing. It's Benes, but I can't make out what he is doing. He has got his body on one side as if he is speaking.

29. *MM*. I think of what we were talking about at tea. He and the Goodenough boys at school out in the Bush. He and the Goodenough boys and the ponies.

GM (on entering the room). This is Australian. It's the school at Southey's and it's Leonard and Bill Goodenough with their Shetland ponies.

¹ The exiled King of Greece, Murray seems to have got the atmosphere of change and expectation, though nothing else.

² The Assembly of the League of Nations, at which Benes was a prominent figure.

(GM got the feel of Australia at once.)

30. *MM.* I'll think of Brailsford in Macedonia with all the mess Gilbert was describing just now, with all the sick and Dr Moon coming out.

GM (at once). This is all horrid, full of distress—wounded and sick people—I should think in Greece. Oh, I suppose it's Brailsford in the Greek War when Moon came out.

31. *MM.* I want him to do a thing which I don't know if he has ever heard about. It is Lothair [?] Small's father stealing food from his own house to give to a poor man.

GM. Don't think I can do this. The maids were singing.¹

32. *John Allen.* I think of the priest walking by the shore of the sea after Agamemnon had refused him.

GM. βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.

(*Right.*)²

33. *Kenneth Edwards.* I think of coming into my room on the first day of Eights and finding a note to say that I had to row in the eight unexpectedly.

GM. This is very faint. I can't get much. I get just a momentary impression of you opening a letter on the table and being rather pleased. (*You can't see what is in the letter?*) No, I can't get any more.

(Kenneth concentrated on the rowing very hard.)

34. *J. Blomfield* (*MM* taking notes). I get Lady Richards walking along the road in a grey mackintosh, rather blown about by the wind and the rain.

GM. Someone walking in the rain? Couldn't be sure but I should think it was Lady Richards (because we met her this afternoon³).

35. *MM.* I have Potitis sitting at the Council table signing his treaty with the Council about the care of the Bulgarian minorities, and Himself, (Gilbert), sitting in Lord Parmoor's place.

GM. No. I can't get this. There is too much noise. No. I can't get it.

36. *MM.* A scene in Mr Granville Barker's novel. The nice innocent middle-aged sister goes down to call on the little music-hall actress her brother has married and finds her in

¹ For the damaging effect of noise cf. C 35, C 64, and *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 73.

² Homer, *Iliad*, i. 34: 'And he walked silently beside the shore of the roaring sea.'

³ I am not sure whether the words in brackets are Lady Mary's or Gilbert's.

black and emerald-green jacket and black satin pyjamas.

GM. Roughly, a rather quiet middle-aged woman calling on someone like an actress very funnily dressed.

(*GM* knew it in the hall before coming in, but was cut short by the telephone ringing. He answered the telephone and then said as above.)

37. *MM.* This is not a nice thing: what Nansen was describing the other day of the churchyard at Buzuluk where there lay the great pile of corpses, numbers of children who had fallen dead in the night.

GM. This is perfectly horrible. It's the Russian famine. It's the masses and masses of bodies being carted up every night in the churchyard. (*MM.* *Any particular corpses?*¹) Oh yes, children.

(*Note in GM's hand:* I associate it with Nansen's lecture here.)

VI. November 17th, 1924.

Present: *MM*, Mrs May Elliot Hobbs.

38. *MM.* I think of Cecil Sharp the only time I ever heard <him> in Magdalen, and the Prince of Wales looking insufferably bored.

GM. I should think this was Cecil Sharp, but that's probably guessing—Cecil Sharp lecturing in Magdalen when the Prince of Wales was there and looked bored.

39. *MM.* This <is> General Gater in the middle of the battle of Ypres receiving a letter to ask him whether he would be Dean of New College. He couldn't give his mind to it.

GM. I've got quite a strong feeling of some silly and absurd interruption. I can guess it. It's Gater receiving the letter at the battle of Ypres.

(No hands taken.)

40. *MM.* This is a scene in a book by Aksakoff where the children are taken to their grandparents and the little boy sees and hears his mother kneeling beside the sofa where his father is lying, lamenting at having to leave them.

GM. I should say this was Russian. I think it's a book I haven't read—somebody's remembrances of childhood or something and a family travelling, I think, the children and father and mother. I should think they were going to cross

¹ 'corpses' contemporary notes; 'bodies' transcript.

the Volga.¹ I don't think I can get it more accurately—the children are watching their parents or seeing something about their parents. I should think Aksakoff. They are going to see their grandmother.

41. *MM.* This is Dalcroze and Himself [Gilbert] looking on at the bad performance of the 'Electra' and he trying to be civil and Dalcroze angry.

GM. That crossed my mind, but I rejected it because we had just been talking about the incident.²

For sessions VII and VIII, comprising experiments 42 to 54 conducted at Fisher's Hill on December 6th and 7th, 1924, see Proceedings, Vol. XXXIV. 336-341.

IX. Sunday, February 15th, 1925. Yatscombe.

Present: Basil, MM, Miss Blomfield (notetaker).

(*Note.* Before dinner Basil wrote down a short account of going to Acle [Achill] in a sailing boat and put it in an envelope which he then put in a book without telling anyone that he had done so. He was unable to exclude the thought of this envelope from his mind during the first experiment [C 55], when GM had an impression of something being written. The third experiment [C 57] referred to this envelope.)

55. *Basil.* I am thinking of a young man in 'Sweet Pepper' who suddenly comes out of the box on the steamer going on the Danube to Budapest.

GM. I think it's something written. No, I can't get it. It seems something Russian.

56. *Basil.* The last scene in 'The Cherry Orchard'.

GM. I get a faint feeling of the end of a play and people beginning to move and getting into their coats. (*Basil. Can you get the play?*) Well, I should say 'The Cherry Orchard'.

57. *Basil.* I think of going to Acle.

GM. No, I get a faint impression of the Riviera. This seems to me [blank].

58. *MM.* The scene between Cavour and Victor Emmanuel

¹ Notetaker's comment: 'This is noteworthy because in the book there is a great deal about the family crossing big rivers on this journey to see the grandparents.' Murray's own comment is more precise: 'They did just afterwards have to cross the Volga, and Rosalind said she had been thinking of that, though she did not mention it.' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 165). The Volga crossing occurs in the same book (*Years of Childhood*, Chap. XIX) but as part of a later journey.

² Correct impression rejected as a 'daytime residue'. Cf. B 74.

after signing the Peace of Villafranca: an angry scene of recriminations and Cavour resigns.

GM. This is something to do with the life of Mazzini. I feel as if it had something to do with Victor Emmanuel. A meeting between them, is it? I feel as if it were a sort of military and state occasion.

59. *MM.* A lunch at Professor Colin's house up above Christiania: sprigs of young green on the table and Colin making an enthusiastic speech in praise of the English.

GM. If I get this right there is a very funny thing. Yes, the funny thing is, as I came into the room I remembered I had a long letter from Colin which I had not answered. It is the time we had lunch at Colin's: Mrs Colin and the children there; little things on the table—were they paper streamers?—and Colin made a speech. He said the Norwegian girls had gained so much freedom through the English girls.

(*Note by Lady Mary.* I believe there were perhaps paper streamers as well as birch twigs. He did make a special point about the English girls. I thought of it but didn't mention it.)

60. *MM* (taking the paper and writing [the subject] herself). The garden at Naworth—yews, roses, peacocks, sunshine.

GM. It's somebody surreptitiously passing a letter. I can't think who it is. No, I don't think I can get it.

(*GM* thought vainly of scenes in plays, none of which seemed to him worth mentioning.)

61. *MM.* Do some metre—poetry.

Basil. [blank space]

MM (whispering). Write it after.

GM. No, nothing at all.¹

62. *MM.* A Russian man giving out the quinine to the population in the Steppes, near Samara, and being rude to them, so they had to complain to the Friends.

GM. Oh, I think it's that man who had to distribute coffee or whatever it was to the people at Samara. (*Not coffee: try to get it—its taste.*) Quinine. (*GM* got the taste of the quinine in the end.)

63. *MM.* Driving over the moors in the winter with a temperance speaker wrapped up in a blue officer's coat—dog-cart, very cold.

GM. No. If I were to get it <it> would be like going to a temperance meeting at Naworth.

¹ This appears to be an experiment in which Basil, at Lady Mary's suggestion, tried to convey a piece of poetry (unspecified) without uttering it or writing it down.

X. *September 20th, 1925.*

Present: MM, Basil and Stephen.

64. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and Eve knitting a muffler for Adam.

GM. A [word illegible]. Nothing at all. I can hear all the maids singing in the next room.

65. *Basil.* I'm thinking of the horses going round Tattenham Corner, in the rain, in a bunch, this year, and the jockeys all swearing at the mud being thrown up; and the crowd yelling.

GM. I've got something already. I think it's 'Right Royal':¹ there's a great crush of horses in a race, and they're jostling each other crossing round a corner, and the men are angry, and there's a confusion, and I think it's raining.

66. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Michelangelo lying on a scaffolding and painting the roof of the Sistine Chapel and reciting the speech in the 'Agamemnon' about the beacon to himself.

GM. Oh, I'm getting this. It's the—it's a brilliantly painted Italian roof. It's the roof of the Sistine Chapel and the man lying on his back painting it. Ought I to get something else? No, he's on a sort of scaffolding thing—no more.

67. *Stephen.* I'm thinking of Mr Nasmyth and his under-manager in [the] gallery of his mine, knocking on the wall and then listening at the wall to hear if they can get a reply from the other shaft.

GM. I got a feeling of somebody on a tower or something, waiting for signals.

68. *Stephen.* Elisha going back after seeing Elijah off and striking the water with his mantle and sending an unsolicited testimonial to Liberty's concerning the mantle.

GM. No. I don't get anything.

69. *MM.* Dorothy Garrod digging in the cave she's going to excavate at Gibraltar.

GM. I should say this is D.G. going to her cave.

70. *Stephen.* I'm thinking of Nursie opening the door of the pyramid at Castle Howard which nobody else in the party could open.

GM. It wasn't Ros[alind] and family arriving at Castle Howard?

XI. *February 5th, 1927. Yatscombe.*

Present: Basil, MM, Lotte Radermacher.

71. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Stephen and Chichibu and myself

¹ A poem about a horse race by John Masefield, Murray's neighbour on Boar's Hill.

upsetting a sailing boat in the reach just outside the 'Trout' and Chichibu roaring with laughter and saying 'This is fun' and wading in very cold water.

GM. I shan't get this properly. I think it's Chichibu. . . . I don't think I can get it right. I should say it was you and Chichibu sitting at a table and a Geneva student talking to you.

72. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Jonah arriving from the whale on the beach at Babylon and being arrested for being improperly clothed.

GM. Got a faint impression of someone galloping on a beach—something like that.

73. *MM.* Sitting round the Christmas dinner with the Lamonts at Ammer Wood—reindeer.

GM. Sybil. . . ?

74. *Basil.* I'm thinking of a scene in 'Coningsby' by Disraeli where Coningsby first meets a Jew in a forest and talks to him about life.

GM. Don't think I shall get anything. (A noise.) I get a slight impression of Bolsheviks.

75. *Basil.* I'm thinking of the end of 'Right Royal'¹—the race with all the wishes.

GM. No, nothing at all.

76. *Basil.* I'm thinking of Rosalind writing 'The Leading Note' in an attic at Ventimiglia.

GM. I think I've got this. I think it's Ros[alind] writing a novel, and she's quite young. She's writing 'The Leading Note', and she's only able to write it for a short time. (*Where?*) I get an impression of Alassio.

XII. *May 15th, 1927.*

Present: Rosalind and Arnold Toynbee, Beatrice Rose, Edith Webster.

77. *Rosalind.* I think of the meeting of Tolstoi and Tchaikowsky.

GM. No, I'm only thinking faintly of Judas Iscariot. (A noise.)

78. *Rosalind.* I think of Tchaikowsky playing the piano to Tolstoi and his family and the son playing the violin.

GM. Nothing.

79. *Rosalind.* I think of Lenin sowing with the peasants.

GM. Not a glimmer.

80. *Rosalind.* I think of the lunch-party at the [word illegible] flat with Hatz and von Hoffmann there.

GM. Not a glimmer.

¹ See above on C 65.

81. *Rosalind*. I think of dancing with the head of the Dutch Foreign Office at a café chantant at the Hague.

GM. Got a faint impression of your journey abroad. I should say it was something official—sort of official soirée or dancing or something. . . . Feel as if it were in Holland.

82. *Rosalind*. I think of walking in the park at Belgrade and meeting the English governess.

GM. I'm getting a different feeling. It's somebody who's in rather a state of mind, I should think escaped from Russia. You're meeting her in some curious country—wait a bit, not any one at Robert College or Constantinople College—it's some queer country where you seem to be alone, and you are meeting some sort of Englishwoman who's been driven out of Russia [and] hates the place where she is. Oh yes, I do remember. It's when you went out to Constantinople alone, and met the English governess in the park.¹

83. *Rosalind*. I think of the Hardy poem 'Let me enjoy the world no less'.

GM. No, I don't think. . . .

84. *Rosalind*. I think of the Turkish national officer holding up the water from Constantinople on the ship.

GM. I get a kind of something here [?]. I feel as if it were you when you went off in the Red Cross boat, when you went off to the place where you saw the massacre. The sea near Constantinople—a man looking over at the water, a faint impression of someone looking over. . . .

(The man held up water from Constantinople and looked at it against the light and said 'Stamboul'da'. It was near Ismet.)

85. *Beatrice Rose*. I think of 'phoning from College on Friday morning to [illegible] Rose about my green hat.

GM. Ordering clothes by 'phone. (*What garment?*) A hat, a green hat. Very smart shop of some sort.

86. *Edith Webster*. I think of the Castalian spring at Delphi, how we all drank the water there.

GM. I don't think I shall get it, but I've got a slight feeling of atmosphere, as if there were something terrible going to happen, as if it were the night before something—an atmosphere of suspense.

(*Rosalind* was thinking of saying goodbye to someone who

¹ Murray annotates: "The history and "state of mind" of the English governess was correct, but had not been mentioned. I had some faint memory of the incident. The "queer country" was Serbia." (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 165).

was going to be killed—Hugo? Rupert? [She said] 'I got the feeling of "This is the end".'¹

87. *Edith Webster*. I'm thinking of the exam. in June, how afraid I'm going to be of it.

XIII. *January 22nd, 1928.*

GM. Something to do with your exam. in American history. Present: MM, Stephen, Mrs G. D. H. Cole, L. W. Snow.

88. *Stephen*. Scene in film of Battle of Falkland Islands, in which (the) Germans see smoke in the harbour and then realize that it's the British ships.

GM. Your ship coming from America. No, ships: the German ships coming up in the film of the Battle of Coronel; the smoke.

89. *Stephen*. I think of a double-decked bus with 80 Americans on board, going to visit the Masefelds, and Mrs Masefeld turning them all away.

GM. I should say it was American.

90. *Stephen*. I'll think of that scene Margery told us of the other day, of those men in the police-station holding the door against Inspector Webb and then suddenly letting him fall through.

GM. No. I get a faint impression of Margery Wace doing something.

91. *Mrs Cole*. The man in Browning who is dying and sees a row of bottles at the end of the bed, and it reminds him of where he met his girl when he was young.

GM. 'How sad and mad and bad it was,
But oh, how it was sweet.'²

92. *Mrs Cole*. The inn in 'The Cloister and the Hearth' where two travellers came and in the night, feeling something uncanny, went down to explore and found underneath a trap-door the bones and skulls of previous travellers.

GM. Mrs Cole travelling. She met two people who seemed to have bones and skeletons—bones and skulls. It seems to be in a train, and I should say they were medical students, but that's a guess.

93. *Mrs Cole*. Priam coming to Achilles to plead for his son's body.

¹ Murray annotates: 'Rosalind had not spoken. She had evidently intended or expected to give the next subject, but E.W. was asked instead' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 166).

² 'How sad and mad and bad it was—

But then, how it was sweet!'

Browning, *Confessions*.

'Uttered instantly on entrance' according to Murray, *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 166.

GM (at once). The end of the 'Iliad', Priam pleading for his son's body.

94. *Mrs Cole*. Incident in play I saw a long time ago which took place in (the) Chinese Quarter of San Francisco, in which (a) Chinaman slinks across (the) stage and steals a baby.

GM. I get an impression of a play called 'The Cat and the Cherub'. No, not 'the Cherub' but something else—a Chinese play in San Francisco. . . . No, not 'The Cat and the Cherub', but there's a Chinaman creeping across the stage to steal a baby.

95. *L. W. Snow*. In 'Vanity Fair', Becky Sharp throws Dr Johnson's Dictionary at the schoolmistress.

GM. Nothing.

96. *Stephen*. George Rickey¹ and me riding the motor-bike past the inhabitants of Moultsford Lunatic Asylum, and one cheery-looking man with gold spectacles on his forehead barking furiously at us like a dog.

GM. A curiously confused and ridiculous scene. You and someone on a motor-bicycle, and a scene of great confusion—perhaps the bicycle is broken down. But there's a confused rabble and—I know it sounds ridiculous—but someone on all fours barking like a dog. (Then, after a little encouragement.) Are they lunatics by any chance?

XIV. Sunday, November 24th, 1929. Yatscombe.

Present: Margaret Davies, David Davies, MM.

97. *Margaret Davies*. Medici Chapel and tombs. Sudden chill, absolute stillness, marble figures who seem to have been there alone all night.

GM. I wonder if this is right. I've got a feeling of a scene in my 'Nephrekepta' where the man goes in, passage after passage, to the inner chamber where Nephrekepta is lying dead with the shadows of his wife and child sitting beside him. But I think it's Indian.

98. *Margaret D.* Scene from Hickey's Memoirs:² he goes up one morning on board, and finds the beginning of a cyclone—an orange sky low on the horizon, clouds flying in all directions, and the wind 'shrieking through the rigging like a bosun's whistle'. The Portuguese sailors were all too

¹ 'Rickey' Murray, *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 164: 'Rickey' contemporary notes and transcript.

² *Memoirs of William Hickey*, ed. Alfred Spencer ('H—y's Memoirs' transcript).

frightened to do anything but pray aloud—no hatches battened down and no sails lowered.

GM. A high (wind) at sea, violent colours in the sky, and somebody going on board, probably at the beginning of the voyage.

99. *Margaret D.* Jane Eyre at school standing on a stool, being called a liar by Mr Brocklehurst. The school spread out below her, and the Brocklehurst family 'a mass of shot purple silk pelisses and orange feathers'.

GM. Here again . . . My mother at her French school being labelled 'impie'¹ I reject that. But a sense of obloquy: girl standing up on a form in a school, and the school there, and people coming in, and she is being held up to obloquy in some way or other. A thing in a book certainly. I think they're calling her a liar. I get an impression of the one girl standing up and a group of people or a family coming in and denouncing her. I think it's English. (*Colour of the people's dresses?*) I can't get the colour of the people's dresses.

- 99a. (*Margaret D.* goes out; *GM* gives the thought.)² Napoleon looking at a certain battlefield and saying 'Un magnifique champ de bataille', looking at dead bodies.

Margaret D. A room with machinery in it. Something with a regular beat in it—something with a regular rhythm.

- 99b. *GM* (giving the thought). An Indian conjurer making a mango-tree grow.

Margaret D. Is it something with bright light in it, bright light in the distance—a feeling of distance—a feeling of distance or height?

100. *Margaret D.* gives the thought. A scene from a Chekov play. One moment in 'The Cherry Orchard' when Varvara flings down the keys in the middle of the room when it's announced that Lopahin has bought the cherry orchard—a big party, all the dancers. . . .

GM. This is Russian. It's, oh a sort of—yes, it's a helpless sort of incompetent people. Not Tolstoi or Tourgenieff. Oh, Chekov, 'The Cherry Orchard', when the man throws the keys on the ground. (*Margaret D.* *Not a man.* . . .)

101. *MM.* Rosalind—car—poor Bulgarian. (*Right.*)³

¹ Murray annotates: 'I should explain that my mother had a story that when she was at a school in France, she had been made to wear a placard labelled "impie"' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 164).

² This experiment and the next seem to be the only recorded instances where Murray attempted to take the part of agent.

³ Apparently an experiment which was accidentally omitted from the record. The salient points were later scribbled in by Lady Mary.

102. *Margaret D.* I'm going to think of Byron and Annabella driving to Halmaby in a chariot. As they passed Durham the bells rang out and Byron said, very sarcastically, 'Ringing for our happiness, I suppose'.

GM. This seems to me rather like a scene out of Miss Austen, only I don't think it is. Sort of time of Miss Austen, and it's some exceedingly dashing rakish person going off on his honeymoon. I think it's a four-in-hand, an old-fashioned carriage. What, ought I to get more? (*Any emotion?*) No, no clear emotion—emotion of unsatisfactoriness—excepting that he's a very rakish sort of—oh, I should <say> he was Byron.

XV. *December 1st, 1929.*

Present: Basil, MM, Pauline Murray.

103. *Basil.* I think of Stephen being shown over the cabins of the R 101 by that flying engineer and saying that it looked like the inside of a submarine.

GM. Oh, it's Stephen being polite and agreeable. Oh yes, he's being shown over the airship by that engineer commander; he's looking at the engines.

104. *Basil.* 'He stood, and heard the steeple

Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.

One, two, three, four, to market-place and people

It tossed them down.'

GM. A poem, Housman, can't quite remember:

'de dum de dum the steeple

Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.

One, two, three, four . . .'¹

105. *Basil.* I think of Pauline and Rosalind driving across a piece of desert in a hansom cab to look at the Pyramids and laughing a great deal.

GM. Not quite getting this. It's like a horse careering over the desert, a horse drawing something. No, I don't think I can get it. It's like a—it's rather like a runaway hansom cab, in Egypt. From Pauline's expression I should think it was she.

106. *Basil.* I'm thinking of a scene at the Peace Conference, the Council of Four. Balfour is asleep and Wilson is looking very pale and Lloyd George has been taunting Clemenceau and he sits back in his chair and wonders whether Clemenceau

¹ A. E. Housman, *Last Poems*, XV. Basil had set the same subject twice before, B 28 and C 47. Murray's response was strikingly similar on all three occasions, though only on this third attempt did he identify the poem as Housman's.

- is going to have a stroke because he looks so blue and angry.
 GM. I'm getting a feeling of a fierce old man, whom I now recognise as Clemenceau. I don't think I'll get it <any> more. I should think it was Clemenceau sitting with Lloyd George and Wilson—I get the feeling of a tigerish old man.
107. *Pauline*. I think of Basil having a quarrel with Beaverbrook and getting turned out of the 'Express'.
 GM. No good. If I guessed I should guess it was Basil doing something.
108. *Basil* (suggested by MM). Iphigenia coming out on to the steps of the temple with the image when she's made the plot.
 GM. Oh yes, it's a Greek play. It's Iphigenia coming out of the temple with the image.¹

XVI. *January 6th, 1931. Yatscombe.*

Present: Rosalind, MM, Tony and Philip Toynbee, Phyllis Murray.

109. *Rosalind*. I think of an old Hoja of Broussa taking Arnold and me round some Sultans' tombs and cypress trees.
 GM. I should say it was something Moslem, not new Turk at all but ancient Moslem. I should say tombs of old kings or prophets or someone, and a kind of holy man pointing to them or moving about them. (*Rosalind*. See if you can get a little more.) Not India: I thought at first it was India, now I'm getting a sort of Cook's tour.
110. *Rosalind*. I think of the battlements of Cartagena in South America, old Spanish battlements, and I think of some of the early Jesuits walking there, reading books.
 GM. Something quite different. . . . I don't think I've done anything like this. I get a feeling of 'Death of the Archbishop'²—I don't mean it comes out of <it>, but I get a feeling of old Catholic Central America, old town walls and priests. I get an impression of sort of crenellated walls and I should think sort of time of the Spanish Conquest. . . . They look to me just like priests. (*Any particular priests?*) Oh, I should think they'd be Jesuits.
111. *Philip*. The hound of the Baskervilles³ when they're waiting just behind the mist, with glowing eyes.
 GM. I can think of Tilda—being terrified of Tilda—sort of enormous Tilda with fiery eyes.

¹ Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1157ff.

² Novel by Willa Cather about Central America: actual title, *Death comes for the Archbishop*.

³ In the novel of the same name by Conan Doyle.

112. *Tony*. I'm going to think of a picture out of the 'Illustrated London News'. I think of a skirmish on the Danube in the Russo-Turkish War, 1877.

GM (as Phyllis came in). Can't get it. A faint impression of a battle.

113. *Tony*. I think of the battle of Thermopylae.

GM. This gets all mixed up with the other—I think this is a battle too.

114. *Phyllis*. 'Cromwell, I do not think to shed a tear
In all my misery; but thou hast forced me,
Out of thine honest heart (*sic*) to play the
woman.'¹

GM. This is completely different. It's a play, a Shakespeare play. It's Cardinal Wolsey in 'Henry VIII': 'Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition.'

(*Transcriber's note*: Was this part of the same or a subsequent experiment?)

XVII. January 20th, 1933.

Present: MM, Phyllis and Pamela Murray.

115. *Phyllis*. 'My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,

As men's have done through sudden fears.'

GM. Nothing.

116. *Phyllis*. I think of Lady Bailey when she first saw the rescuing aeroplane coming to her.

GM. I think I shall get there. It's one of those women lost in the Sahara. It's not the two. It's Lady Bailey coming down in the Sahara.

(*Phyllis says the inaccuracy was her fault, as she was visualizing the rescuing aeroplane coming down.*)

117. *Phyllis*. Pure imagination: the Spartans defending the Pass of Thermopylae, and the monument and inscription (quoted [by her?]).

GM. This is an ancient Greek thing. It's a battle of some sort. I think it's the battle of Thermopylae. Is it the Persians coming over the mountains before the battle? Getting a lot of different scenes because I remember them. (Quotes scenes.)²

¹ Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, III, ii, 428-30, slightly misquoted. In response Murray quotes line 440 from the same speech by Wolsey.

² Cf. C 113, where in response to the same subject Murray got only 'a battle'.

XVIII. November 23rd, 1935.

Present: Basil, MM, Aline, Frau Olden, Miss J. Blomfield (notetaker).

118. *Basil*. I am thinking of a scene which has been in my head all the afternoon, from that book 'No Mean City', in which the hero leads his gang in an attack on a rival gang in Glasgow, and he is waving his razors in front of his face like a drum-major as he goes to the attack.

GM. I get a horrid impression of squalor and general disagreeableness. I should think it was Glasgow slums, and I should think it was that book. (Right: we had been talking about the book before dinner.) A general impression of squalor. Faint impression of a man going away from somewhere.

119. *Basil*. I am thinking of standing on the roof of an office in Whitehall during the Armistice Day silence, and the birds rising up and wheeling and screaming at the unaccustomed silence.

GM. I have got a vivid picture of white pigeons in the air. I think it is a thing Godfrey El(ton) told me of at Kut. White pigeons. . . . No, it's not that. It is pigeons and birds; they all [?] fly up quite suddenly. It is in London—some sort of ceremonial or procession going on. Then there is something that startles them.

120. *Basil*. I am thinking of Stresemann sitting in the Bavaria Café at Geneva and drinking beer out of a large quart mug and talking about the Colonies.

GM. I get a faint impression of a rather fat bald German drinking beer. I should think it was Stresemann. I should think he was on a steamer or a boat.

121. *Basil*. εἴθε γένοιμην . . . would I were

In Grantchester, in Grantchester!

GM. This is a poem. It's Rupert Brooke, 'In Grantchester, in Grantchester!'

122. *Basil*. The evening in the war when Agnes and I had planned to spend the night at the top of the windmill at Overstrand, and Dad heard as we were going off and stopped us, and there was a raid that night.

GM. This is two small children running like anything in fright. It's you and Agnes going to hide in the mill in Overstrand during the raid at Overstrand.

(Basil had slept that night outside in the revolving shelter—he slept through most of the raid—he awoke suddenly

- and ran like a hare across the garden into the house.)
123. *Frau Olden*. This afternoon in Cornmarket <Street> two not very big children and <a> small one nearly run over; the driver's expression.
GM. [No response.]
- 123a. *Aline*. The airship R 101 crashing into the side of the hill at Beauvais, and the poacher who saw it running out to tell the people that it had crashed.
GM. I think I heard the word 'airship'.¹ I think . . . I suppose it must be an airship accident of some sort. Yes. . . .

XIX. March 1st, 1946.

[Present: not stated.]

124. *Rosalind*. I'll think of the Russian general at Constantinople, walking in the garden in the evening in his uniform.
GM. I think of the Russians coming into Vienna.
 (Rosalind had thought of this answer first, but discarded it.)
125. *Rosalind*. I think of Maria Pallavicini driving out of Budapest with all her family in the car.
GM. I get an impression of one of your aristocratic Austrian ladies; she is driving rather fast from a town which is being attacked—I suppose her house has been destroyed. I suppose Hungary, Budapest. (*Rosalind*. *Is she alone?*) Yes—no—she's got relations.
 (Rosalind had thought of her house in Slovakia—destroyed.)
126. *Rosalind*. I think of Caldey, and I think of Brother Thomas floating the cattle across to the mainland.
GM. The monk going across in the little boat to her island on the west coast.²
127. *Rosalind*. I'm thinking of the wicked French nobleman who was a friend of Joan of Arc, and killing a little boy in his castle.
GM. This is very different. I think it's historical, past. Oh, it's war, it's Joan of Arc and somebody or other. It's one of her followers. No, I can't quite get it—a grand person and very devoted. (*Rosalind*. *His character?*) Very religious. I get it mixed up with Shaw's play.
128. *Rosalind*. Well, this is two things. It's the Curé d'Ars, first hiding from the army and later being buffeted by the Devil.

¹ See below, p. 399.² Caldey Island, where Rosalind was living.

GM. It seems rather mediaeval—a priest. He seems to be hiding somehow. But it's confused: he seems also to be fighting with the Devil.

ANALYSIS

In the tables which follow, *S* stands for complete success, *P* for partial success, *F* for a false response and *O* for absence of any response. '%SP' means complete plus partial successes as a percentage of the total number of experiments. (I have lumped complete and partial successes together for this purpose, since where the target is very complex the distinction between them is not easy to draw and has little practical importance: even the partial successes are nearly always well beyond the range of any likely chance coincidence.)

TABLE I
Series C, Summary of Results by Date

| Date | <i>S</i> | <i>P</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>O</i> | Total | %SP |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|------|
| May 30th, 1920 | 3 | — | 1 | — | 4 | 75 |
| May 31st, 1920 | 3 | 1 | 1 | — | 5 | 80 |
| August 1st, 1920 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 14 | 57·1 |
| December 8th, 1920 | — | 3 | 1 | — | 4 | 75 |
| October 26th, 1924 | 5 | 3 | — | 2 | 10 | 80 |
| November 17th, 1924 | 3 | — | — | 1 | 4 | 75 |
| December 6th, 1924 (at Fisher's Hill) | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 50 |
| December 7th, 1924 (at Fisher's Hill) | — | — | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| February 5th, 1925 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 55·5 |
| September 20th, 1925 | 2 | 3 | — | 2 | 7 | 71·4 |
| February 5th, 1927 | — | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 50 |
| May 15th, 1927 | 5 | — | 2 | 4 | 11 | 45·5 |
| January 22nd, 1928 | 5 | 3 | — | 1 | 9 | 88·8 |
| November 24th, 1929 | 3 | 3 | — | — | 6 | 100 |
| December 1st, 1929 | 4 | 2 | — | — | 6 | 100 |
| January 6th, 1931 | 3 | 3 | — | — | 6 | 100 |
| January 20th, 1933 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 3 | 66·6 |
| November 23rd, 1935 | 3 | 2 | — | 1 | 6 | 83·3 |
| March 1st, 1946 | 2 | 3 | — | — | 5 | 100 |
| 19 sessions | 54 | 36 | 16 | 22 | 128 | 70·3 |

It will be apparent from Table I that Murray's mysterious gift suffered no diminution with advancing age, such as might be expected if success were dependent on hyperacuity of hearing. In series C as a whole the proportion of successes, complete or partial, was in fact by my estimate a little higher (70.3%) than in series B as estimated by Mrs Sidgwick (66.1%) and considerably higher than in series A as estimated by Mrs Verrall (61%). Moreover within the series, which spans 26 years, the most consistently successful sessions occurred relatively late; among them was the last session of all, held when Murray was aged eighty, at which he scored in five trials two complete successes (one of them on a double target embracing two distinct scenes) and three partial successes. Can his hearing have remained hyperacute at eighty?

TABLE II
Series C, Summary of Results by Principal Agents

| Agent | S | P | F | O | Total | %SP |
|--|----|---|---|---|-------|------|
| Basil Murray | 15 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 37 | 62.2 |
| Rosalind Murray | 14 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 29 | 65.5 |
| Lady Mary Murray | 10 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 21 | 71.4 |
| Stephen Murray | 2 | 4 | — | 1 | 7 | 85.7 |
| Margaret Davies | 2 | 3 | — | — | 5 | 100 |
| Agnes Murray ¹ | — | 3 | 1 | — | 4 | 75 |
| Phyllis Murray | 2 | 1 | — | 1 | 4 | 75 |
| J. G. Piddington (at Fisher's Hill) | 2 | — | 1 | 1 | 4 | 50 |
| Mrs G. D. H. Cole | 3 | 1 | — | — | 4 | 100 |
| 12 occasional agents | 4 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 71.4 |

Following Mrs Sidgwick's practice, I use the term 'principal agent' (abbreviated 'p/a') to describe the person who chose the target subject and announced it to the rest of the company.² Mrs Verrall found that in series A success was greatest when Rosalind Murray (Mrs Arnold Toynbee) acted in this capacity (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 83); and Mrs Sidgwick tells us that in series B 'outsiders' were proportionately less successful than members of Murray's immediate family (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 218). As Table II shows, neither of these statements is true of series C. In this series three members of Murray's family—his son Basil, his

¹ Agnes Murray, a frequent p/a in the earlier experiments, died in 1922.

² Occasionally the target subject had been suggested by some one other than the p/a (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 71f.); but in the present series I find only one recorded instance of this (C 108).

daughter Rosalind, and his wife Lady Mary—acted regularly, though by no means exclusively, as p/a's; but both Basil and Rosalind had somewhat less than the average proportion of successes (complete or partial) and even Lady Mary, the most successful of the three, did no better than the combined scores of twelve 'occasional' p/a's.¹ The highest percentage scores in this series were achieved by two 'outsiders', Margaret Davies and Mrs G. D. H. Cole. But too much importance should not be attached to these at first sight surprising results. 'Outsiders' were seldom invited to try their luck unless Murray had already shown himself to be in good form, and the figures involved are in any case too small for statistical significance.²

What the table does establish is that Murray had some degree of success with almost every p/a who was tried. Out of a total of 21 p/a's only three proved complete failures, and their failure is not significant, since they functioned only once each. This is hardly what we should expect on the hyperacuity hypothesis: since voices vary considerably in pitch, volume and carrying power, we might expect to find habitual success with certain p/a's and consistent failure with others. It would also appear that the vast store of shared memories and common interests which must exist within any family circle was not in this case—as has sometimes been suggested—a decisive determinant of success.

It should of course be borne in mind that not only the p/a but the entire company present were available as potential telepathic agents; and instances like C 86 (see below, p. 401) suggest that some of them did at least occasionally contribute to the result. It may be significant in this connection that at least one of the three 'regular' p/a's was present at every session, though none was present at all sessions.

Table III suggests that the type of scene chosen as target had relatively little influence in determining success or failure: Murray had conspicuous successes with scenes of all types.³ Quotations or references to particular passages in specified books naturally offer a narrower target than more vaguely conceived

¹ I have classified as 'occasional' p/a's persons who acted in this capacity on one occasion only, and on that occasion not more than twice.

² It is psychologically interesting that, as Murray told a journalist in 1929, the guessing-sessions began as a nursery game invented by Rosalind in her childhood. It was only later that Lady Mary persuaded him to exhibit his powers to adults, and it appears that Rosalind long retained a central rôle: 'her mind seemed to reach mine more positively than any one's else' (*Journal A.S.P.R.*, xxiii, 1929, 397f.).

³ *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 84. Cf. Mrs Sidgwick's table, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 224, which is not, however, directly comparable with mine, since her classification is slightly different and she counts only complete successes.

TABLE III
Series C, Summary of Results by Type of Target

| Type | S | P | F | O | Total | %SP |
|-------------------------------|----|----|---|---|-------|------|
| Personal or family | 17 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 38 | 76.3 |
| Contemporary or historical | 15 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 40 | 72.5 |
| From books | 12 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 31 | 61.3 |
| Quotations | 6 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 60 |
| Fantastic | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 77.8 |

scenes, so the percentage of complete or partial success is naturally a little lower, but their successful identification is correspondingly more impressive. Especially striking is C 21 where Murray reproduced with substantial accuracy a particular prose sentence from Ibsen (the other quotations are all from well-known poems). For the rest, these figures give only faint support to the view of Mrs Verrall and Mrs Sidgwick that 'the fantastic and the unusual specially lends itself to the successful guessing of Professor Murray';¹ the differences are too small to be significant. And despite Murray's own observation that he 'never had any success in guessing any subject that was not in some way interesting or amusing' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 163), the present series includes a few cases where apparently banal and unexciting personal incidents were successfully guessed, e.g. C 34 and 85.

What is remarkable is the frequency with which Murray began by correctly guessing either (a) the type of subject or (b) its emotional tone or (c) its geographical or historical context, regardless of whether these had been specifically mentioned by the p/a. Examples of (a) are C 4 'This is a book'; C 16 'I think this is an absurd one, isn't it? Concocted?'; C 114 'This is completely different. It's a play.' See also C 21, 25, 40, 47, 56, 94, 104, 108, 121.

Examples of (b): C 30 (*at once*) 'This is all horrid, full of distress'; C 50 'This is something rather horrible' (*Spoken at once on entering the room*); C 96 'A curiously confused and ridiculous scene'. See also C 3, 37, 39, 82, 86, 99, 106, 118.

Examples of (c): C 40 'I should say this was Russian'; C 51 'Something eighteenth-century'; C 109 'I should say it was something Moslem—not new Turk at all but ancient Moslem'.

¹ *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 84. Cf. Mrs Sidgwick's table, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 224, which is not, however, directly comparable with mine, since her classification is slightly different and she counts only complete successes.

Only two Australian scenes were included in this series, C 5 and 29, and both were immediately recognized as Australian. See also C 9, 10, 66, 100, 102, 110, 117, 127.

In all the above instances Murray's apprehension of the target was gradual and progressive. His apparent starting point was not a sensory image of any kind, but the experience of a certain 'atmosphere' surrounding the target. When once this had been established, the details of the scene would usually emerge bit by bit. Mrs Sidgwick rightly compared it to the gradual process by which we sometimes recover from the preconscious a forgotten name or address, groping with the help of some faint association until the required word finally surfaces like a reluctant fish. Sometimes the target scene is reached by way of an associated personal memory which is at first mistaken for the target, then rejected: C 99 and 119 are excellent examples. Such cases stand in marked contrast to others where the right answer appears instantly in a single mysterious flash of intuition, as in C 32, 62, 69, 93, 103. As a rule the flash is confidently recognized as correct ('Oh, it's So-and-so doing such-and-such!'), whereas less confident assertions ('I have a faint impression of . . .') often turn out to be quite wrong.

TELEPATHY OR HYPERAESTHESIA?

No one who has read the present series of experiments or those published by Mrs Verrall and Mrs Sidgwick can suppose that the successes achieved in them were due to chance coincidence. And no one who knew Gilbert Murray can suppose that conscious fraud played any part. The only hypothesis alternative to telepathy which can be seriously entertained is that of unconscious auditory hyperaesthesia. This was first proposed by Murray himself, though later withdrawn after he had read the objections urged by Mrs Verrall and Mrs Sidgwick.¹ The present series throws no startling fresh light on the problem, but it does provide some additional scraps of evidence.

¹ *Proceedings*, Vols. XXIX, 48 and XLIX, 162. It seems clear that Murray would have been happy to explain away his embarrassing gift. He 'found the whole business rather unpleasant' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 61). 'It is a sort of joke that Nature has played on me . . . for I am by temperament and training as sceptical a person as you will find. . . I don't like these vague things!' (interview quoted in *Journal A.S.P.R.*, Vol. XXIII, 397f.). And in 1933 I find him writing half seriously to a friend 'I am naturally ashamed of it and keep it hidden as far as possible'. I think this instinctive resistance to the supernormal explains his refusal to submit his gift to the laboratory tests that many psychical researchers would have liked to impose.

Two considerations seem *prima facie* to point strongly to hyperaesthesia. The first is negative: Mrs Verrall reported that on 10 occasions when the description of the target scene was not spoken aloud but merely written down there was not a single success (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 67). Similar cases of failure are C 2, where nothing was spoken or written, and apparently C 61 (though the contemporary note is far from clear). Unfortunately neither in these cases nor in Mrs Verrall's do we learn whether Murray was told in advance about the intended change of procedure.¹ If he was, the argument from failure loses much of its force, since *any* variation from the accustomed routine was for psychological reasons liable to prevent success.

Secondly, there are three cases where Murray stated that he had 'heard' a word which was actually spoken in his absence, and the experiment was therefore stopped: in B 24 he heard the name 'Pendennis' (p/a, Basil Murray); in B 25 the name 'Denis' (p/a, again Basil); in C 123a the word 'airship' (p/a, Aline Murray). Our information is again defective: we are not told whether the suspect word was spoken in an unusually loud voice, or how far Murray was from the door on these occasions. We may, however, compare the 'control' tests carried out at Yatscombe by Mr and Mrs Salter, when Mrs Salter, standing in the passage some three yards from the closed drawing-room door, was unable to catch anything of what her husband said in the drawing-room except when he was 'fairly declaiming and talking much louder than in ordinary conversation'.² The Salters concluded that 'a very high degree of hyperaesthesia'³ would have to be postulated, to account in any degree for the results'.

This conclusion is greatly strengthened when we consider the

¹ A 65 is perhaps an exception. There Murray said on returning 'I think you've been writing it', which would seem to imply that he had not been specifically warned in advance.

² *Journal*, Vol. XXXII, 35. Murray himself had carried out similar tests (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 230), but precise details are not given.

³ The hyperaesthesia theory found its most prominent supporter in Charles Richet, but even he admitted that 'hyperaesthesia pushed to such lengths is very surprising' (*Thirty Years of Psychological Research*, Eng. trans. 189). It was explicitly rejected by McDougall after applying 'the stock laboratory tests', and implicitly by other qualified judges such as Sigmund Freud, Sir Alister Hardy and the late Sir Cyril Burt. Lord Rayleigh went so far as to suggest that the term has no definite meaning and that 'the idea of people who can do wonderful feats in that way is a myth' (*Journal*, Vol. XXXII, 1941, 61f.). Dr R. H. Kay of Keble College, Oxford, who has made a special study of acoustics, writes to me with reference to the conditions at the Fisher's Hill sessions 'I am inclined to agree with you that hyperacuity of hearing seems to be a very unlikely explanation (unless the sound insulation was most unusually poor). More than that one cannot say without proper acoustic experimentation in the actual rooms and, now of course too late, with the actual voices.'

much more stringent conditions imposed at the successful Fisher's Hill session of 6 December 1924. There Murray was banished to a room which was not adjacent to the drawing-room (where the experiments were conducted) but separated from it by a third room about 36 feet long; and the target subjects were announced in a voice so low that 'more than once the recorder had to ask for words to be repeated'.¹ In the light of this evidence we should keep in mind the possibility that the three words which Murray 'heard' were not in the ordinary sense overheard but were the imagined sounds which served as the channel for a telepathic impulse: compare B 34 and 49, where Murray experienced an illusory but veridical smell, and C 62, where he 'got the taste of the quinine'.²

Several considerations tell against the hyperaesthesia view. We have already noticed that Murray retained his gift unimpaired into old age, and that he succeeded with all sorts of p/a's, regardless of the familiarity or the carrying power of their voices. We have already observed (as others have done) how often he began by getting the general 'atmosphere' of a scene rather than any concrete detail such as might have reached him if he had unconsciously overheard a word or two: as Aldous Huxley put it, 'it seems to be a kind of smelling out of the thought'.³

And we may further ask how it came about that Murray's supposed hyperacuity of hearing escaped detection in daily life—for example, when listening to country sounds as he walked with a friend on Boar's Hill or in Switzerland. On ordinary occasions, he told Mrs Sidgwick, his hearing was 'normal but certainly not unusually acute' (*Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 230). Why did the hyperacuity manifest itself only in the special conditions of the experimental sessions? Ostensibly telepathic powers, on the other hand, did occasionally manifest themselves in ordinary life, a point which critics seem to have overlooked. In *Journal*, Vol. XX (1922), 333-5, Murray reported a dream in which he reproduced all the essential features of a fantastic anecdote which Rosalind had intended but forgotten to tell him the evening before—a situation significantly close to the experimental one. And an ostensibly telepathic impression, this time concerning the death

¹ *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 337. Witnesses who attended sessions at Yatscombe also testify that the p/a spoke in a low voice (Mrs Verrall, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 107; Mrs Salter, *Journal*, Vol. XXXII, 30).

² Cf. *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 237 ff. Compare also A 32, where the subject was Alfred Zimmern riding on horseback and Murray heard 'the noise of hoofs in the street' but no one else did: was this hyperaesthesia or telepathic illusion?

³ See note 1, p. 371.

of an old lady, is mentioned in an unpublished letter of 1956. I leave out of account two putative cases of precognition, both of them concerned with breakages, reported by Murray in *Journal*, Vol. X (1901), 61 f., since he thought it possible to explain these in terms of unconscious hyperaesthesia of some undefined sort. But no hyperaesthesia will explain the dream.

Finally, and to my mind decisive, there is the evidence of occasions when Murray showed awareness of the *unspoken* thoughts of some person in the room, usually the p/a. Examples of this have been quoted by Mrs Verrall (A 60, 66, 78, 83, 102), by Mrs Sidgwick (B 1, 6, 56, 88, 115) and by Mrs Salter (Exp. 1); I need not recapitulate them here.¹ The new series includes a number of further instances. Three of them, C 40, 82 and 86, are quoted by Murray in *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX; the last of these is especially interesting in that Murray seems to have got Rosalind's unspoken thought in place of the p/a's spoken one.² Another very striking example is C 49, published as Exp. 8 in the Fisher's Hill sessions, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 339. Unpublished instances are C 59 and 125, in both of which Murray got additional veridical details that had been in the p/a's mind but were not mentioned by her;³ and C 124, where in place of the announced subject he got one which the p/a had silently considered and rejected. These cases, 18 in all, can hardly be explained otherwise than by telepathy, unless we assume that the agents concerned—most often Rosalind, but also Lady Mary, Agnes, Basil, Mrs Salter and a certain Miss H.—were all of them lying.

To these may be added a few cases where Murray seems to have shown awareness of *actions* silently performed in his absence. A striking example on an occasion when writing was substituted for speaking was quoted by Mrs Verrall, *Proceedings*, Vol. XXIX, 68 n.1. We may perhaps compare C 60, where Lady Mary's action in silently seizing the piece of paper from the notetaker and writing down a subject seems to be vaguely reflected in Murray's impression of 'somebody surreptitiously passing a letter'. More curious is C 55, where Basil, acting as p/a, kept thinking of a subject he had secretly written down before the session began, and Murray exclaimed 'I think it's something written', very much as he had done on an earlier occasion at A 65.

¹ See *Proceedings*, Vols. XXIX, 80ff. and XXXIV, 234f.; *Journal*, Vol. XXXII, 31.

² *Proceedings*, Vol. XLIX, 166. On intrusive intervention by would-be agents see Murray's interesting note quoted in *Proceedings*, Vol. XXXIV, 228.

³ It is possible, however, that in these two cases Murray was able, once he got on the right track, to supply these further details from memory.

I conclude that, taken as a whole, Murray's results cannot be convincingly or completely explained without postulating telepathy. If anyone chooses to assume that 'hyperaesthesia' also played some part, I cannot prove him wrong. But I question whether much is gained by introducing a second causal factor almost as mysterious, and as undefined in its limits, as telepathy itself.¹

¹ I must express my gratitude for much kind help to Professor Francis West, who is writing a Life of Murray; and for bibliographical information to Mr Mostyn Gilbert and Mr Fraser Nicol.