

# Analysis of the Problems Presented by Telepathy, And the Sensational Claims Advanced by Its Champions

**T**HE controversy between Garrett P. Serviss and William T. Stead regarding the possibility of mental telegraphy, or telepathy as it is scientifically termed, has aroused widespread interest in this most absorbing of psychical phenomena. To be able to flash messages through space without the aid of even a medium like the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy would undoubtedly be of great moment from a commercial standpoint, to say nothing of the milestone it would mark in the evolution of the human race, but until recent years those who have seriously put forward the claims of telepathy have received scant courtesy from science. Since the formation in England of the Society For Psychical Research, however, the telepathists have enjoyed a greater vogue and have had the satisfaction of adding to their ranks such men as Sir William Crookes, Dr. Oliver Lodge, W. T. Stead and Balfour Stewart in England, and Professor William James, Professor J. H. Hyslop, Dr. Parkhurst and Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) in the United States.

At the same time it must be said that if the majority of scientists do not openly scout the possibility of interchanging ideas through space by mere exercise of will, they aver that telepathy, if it exist, can never become a recognized factor in human life and progress, owing to the variability of the conditions under which it must manifest itself and to the fact that the stress of latter day life is such that the mind is seldom found in the state of receptivity and passiveness requisite for the successful transmission of a message from the mind of another. Those who are inclined to the views held by Professor Serviss, however, are avowedly skeptical in regard to telepathy, holding that it is absurd to suppose that the mind alone can act as a transmitting agency even admitting the truth of the "etherial wave" theory propounded by Sir William Crookes in his advocacy of telepathy.

It was but natural, therefore, that when Mr. Stead announced the successful transmission by telepathy of messages from Nottingham to London, a distance of 125 miles, a chorus of dissenting voices should arise and that Professor Serviss, acting as spokesman for the skeptics, should propose a test under more rigid conditions than those prevailing at the time the Nottingham-London messages were transmitted.

admitted by many of the experimentalists themselves that they have been but feeling their way, groping in the dark as it were. None would be better pleased than they to be able to demonstrate to the world the truth of the theory to which they cling. Nor would the hard and fast scientists who have given expression to their doubts be

so forth; the second includes impulses to act, telepathically conveyed by the distant sender or agent, such as summing the receiver or percipient to come to him or to visit some mutual friend; the third consists in the transmission of hallucinatory figures, almost always of the agent himself, which the percipient sees while the actual body

factory, although scoffers aver that the explanation for the unexpected acts on the part of the percipient lies in mere coincidence or in posthypnotic suggestion. According to many authorities, however, results have sometimes been obtained in novices attributable to either of these causes. The experiment that caused Mr. Stead

mind to another are made over a short distance, those engaged being careful to avoid the physical contact that might expose them to the old charge that success has been due to "muscle reading." One of the most interesting of minor telepathic experiments is that in which one person is able to draw pictures from mental images formed in the mind of another. The annals of the Psychical society contain hundreds of copies of telepathic pictures such as those reproduced in the illustration.

In making a telepathic drawing the percipient sits with his eyes bandaged and his back turned toward the agent. A third person, in a remote corner, then makes a sketch and holds it so that the agent can see it. The latter at once tries to convey to the mind of the blindfolded man the mental image which the picture has called up in his own mind. If the attempt is successful the percipient will proceed to put on paper the image thus received. Sometimes remarkable likenesses to the original are thus obtained, the similarity and dissimilarity, according to those who believe in telepathy, varying with the intensity of the mental picture conjured up in the agent's mind. Disbelievers assert that the successes are due to coincidence or to a known "figure" preference on the part of the percipient which is catered to by the maker of the original drawing. The latter supposition, however, reflects so seriously upon the integrity of at least one of the principals that it should not lightly be advanced.

Whatever the merits of telepathy or the reasonableness of its claim to popular credence it is interesting to note that those who are firmly convinced of its veridicality are divided in opinion regarding the manner in which it operates. Nor is this at all surprising in view of the element of the unknowable which it so obviously contains. Of the many speculations concerning the laws of telepathy none have been so daring as those advanced by the late P. W. H. Myers, one of the most brilliant writers on all subjects connected with psychical research. In a posthumous work dealing with human personality Mr. Myers suggests that the spirit of the agent directly influences the brain of the percipient, modifying in countless

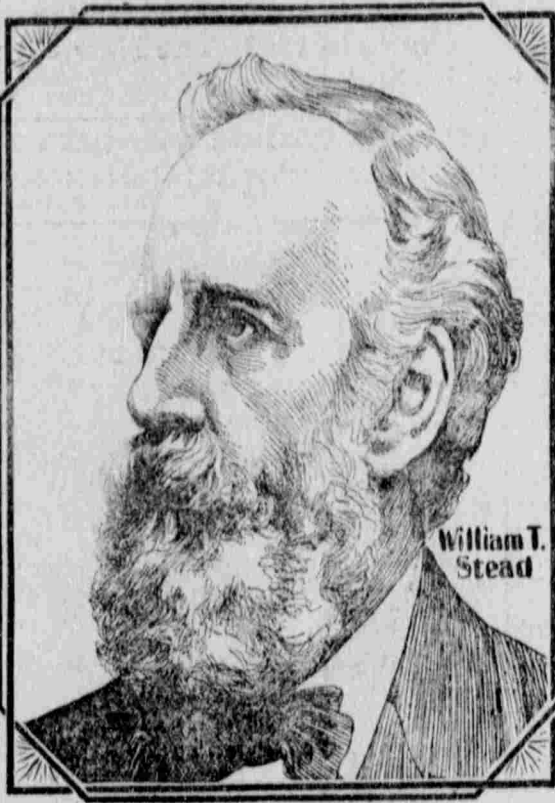
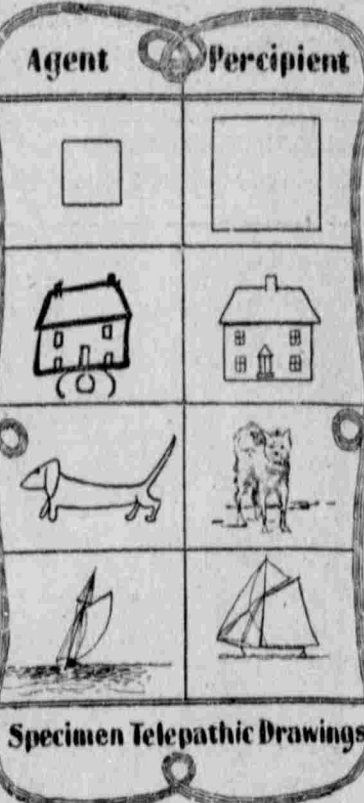
ways each individual cell of both brains. In thus investing the human will with transcendental powers Mr. Myers goes so far as to give it "control over inorganic matter and over organic matter both within and without its own organism." We are irresistibly reminded of the fanciful and bold theories set forth by Bulwer-Lytton in his weird novel, "A Strange Story." Another explanation of telepathy is forthcoming on the basis of regarding the brain as an electro magnetic apparatus, with thought as the product of its functional activity. This was the theory propounded some years ago by Dr. W. J. O'Sullivan. An explanation in high favor with telepathists today is that offered by Sir William Crookes on the hypothesis that thought is carried from mind to mind by ether waves of even smaller amplitude and greater frequency than those that carry the X rays.

The great problem, however, is not how telepathy operates, but whether there is such a thing as telepathy and, if there is, whether it can be put to practical purposes. The telepathists themselves are not a unit on this point. Some report an astonishing diversity in results even when the various experiments are conducted under equally favorable conditions. Those who are convinced of the commercial utility of telepathy assert, on the other hand, that unknown but essential conditions are lacking when the tests fail and remind us that at the time of the Indian mutiny the British had an unpleasant experience with something that sounds suspiciously like telepathy. When the rebellion broke out it became necessary to send many important dispatches across the unsettled districts of India, and although the British authorities had the fastest post service at their disposal their dispatches were invariably forestalled and betrayed to the enemy at far distant points, secret orders being sometimes known to the natives a week before they were officially received by those to whom they had been sent. Matter of fact science argues that whatever the means of communication they rested on a physical, not a psychical, basis. And thus the whole question of telepathy remains in abeyance.

H. ADDINGTON BRUCE



Garrett P. Serviss



William T. Stead

The importance of safeguarding such tests is self evident, for if telepathy is to be put on a scientific basis it must be subjected to the rigid scrutiny with which science regards all that comes within her ken. For some years experiments in telepathy have been conducted by skilled observers both in this country and in England, but interesting as are the results they have obtained, it is

backward in acknowledging the value of telepathy if the veridicality of telepathy could be established beyond peradventure.

The phenomena obtained may, according to those who believe in thought transference, be divided into three classes. In the first falls the transmission, by no normal means of communication, of words, figures, cards and

may be many miles distant. Experiments in the last named class have been as a rule futile of result, but the annals of the Society For Psychical Research contain a few apparently well authenticated cases in which the agent has, it would seem, by mere exercise of will caused the absent percipient to see a phantasmal image. Experiments in the second class have been more satis-

to become convinced that telepathy on a large scale is an accomplished fact falls under the first head of the three-fold classification, and it is significant that in this class the experimentalists have been most successful. It is seldom, however, that anything has been attempted at the long range of the Nottingham-London tests. As a rule the efforts to transfer thought from one

## Marconi, King of the Wireless, Caught by the Camera; Some Characteristic Poses of the Italian Inventor



**T**HIS is the latest photograph of Signor Guglielmo Marconi, and the inventor of the famous system of wireless telegraphy pronounces it by far the best picture ever taken of him.



**S**IGNOR MARCONI is here seen in a characteristic attitude, explaining to some friends the construction of the signal towers and the support afforded them by the ropes behind him.



**T**HIS illustration was made from a snap shot taken as the Italian inventor was about to ascend the narrow stairway leading to the top of one of his towers at Poldhu, Cornwall.



**S**IGNOR MARCONI has now arrived at the summit of the Poldhu tower, from which may be obtained a magnificent view of the Atlantic, the Cornish coast line and the inland country.



**O**NCE more the camera has caught the inventor Marconi at a psychological moment, engaged upon a little drafting work in the office of one of his wireless telegraphic stations.



**T**HIS illustration bears testimony to the undemonstrative nature of Marconi, for it was made from a photograph snapped while he was receiving a most successful transatlantic message.



**I**N this picture Marconi is seen seated in the receiving room of his Newfoundland station, where, Dec. 11, 1901, he first caught a transatlantic signal by wireless telegraph from the Poldhu station.

## Story of the Alamo, Proposed Texan Hall of Fame; Grim Memories Connected With the Venerable Mission

**T**HE steps that are being taken by the De Zavala chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to turn the historic Alamo mission of San Antonio into a Texas hall of fame have drawn the eyes of all America once more to the venerable church fort where William Travis, David Crockett, James Bowie and their devoted followers so long bade defiance to Santa Anna's infuriated army of Mexicans. Of all the missions built in the south and southwest by the intrepid Franciscans none has had a more tragic history than that of the Alamo, though to look upon it today, standing almost in the heart of the city's business district and surrounded by places of trade, none would imagine that here was enacted the grimest scene of the great war for the independence of Texas.

Mystery in its gloomiest form has always attached itself to the Alamo. There is even a cloud of doubt surrounding the date when this blood stained cradle of Texas liberty was first built. In its hand carved front, itself but an echo of past glories, is a stone bearing the date 1757, but historians declare that the foundation stone was laid at least thirteen years earlier. Just what significance the later date bears cannot be learned with certainty. Giraud informs us that the mission was founded in 1792 on the banks of the Rio Grande and that after having been removed to two different sites, it was finally located at San Antonio in 1718 by order of the viceroy of New Spain, the Marquis of Valero. On the other hand an old Spanish document treating of the various missions established in Texas speaks of the "erection" of the Alamo in 1716. It has also been said that the Alamo took twenty-one years in the building. Whenever it came into being the stone structure must have been an imposing

sight with its magnificent facade, its arched roof, its convent and its parol residence. Now much of the grandeur has departed from its yellowish gray walls. Its heifry, its vaulted archways, its oddly carved windows and its winding stairway are in large part memories, but enough remains to make the Alamo the most picturesque spot in the city.

The name Alamo, which is the Spanish for poplar tree, was given to it by the Spanish troops who were at one time quartered in the mission. In those days the Alamo covered a great deal of ground, but this has been little by little swallowed up by the advancing city. When its brave defenders faced the Mexicans in 1835 the several buildings were inclosed by strong walls and a stockade, affording shelter and accommodation for 1,000 men, although the Texan defenders numbered in all but 145, while opposed to them were no less than 4,000 Mexican troops, well armed and officered by shrewd commanders. That the Texans could hold out for days against the onslaught of the Mexicans speaks volumes not only for the courage of the warriors for freedom, but also for the stability of the Alamo's walls.

The memorable siege began Feb. 23, 1836, when Santa Anna invested San Antonio after its dismantling by General Sam Houston. The remaining Texans promptly retired to the protection of the mission, which by this time had developed into a fort, and there, led by Colonel William Barrett Travis, steadfastly refused to surrender to Santa Anna. The Mexicans bombarded the fort to little effect and then attempted to take it by storm, but were driven back time after time by the deadly hail of bullets with which the defenders greeted them. The deadliness of the backwoodsman's aim was such that before the struggle ended, on March 6, 1,600 Mexicans were killed and wounded. When but six Texans remained to continue the unequal conflict the Alamo was surrendered to the in-

famous Santa Anna, who, regardless of humanity or the ethics of warfare, at once had the survivors massacred. But one woman, one servant and one child were spared, the bodies of the victims being dragged into the Alamo's plaza and burned.

The Alamo itself was wrecked in the

burned. The scene that followed the entrance of the maddened Mexicans can hardly be described. An eyewitness, himself a Mexican, later told an American officer who had made a brave but fruitless attempt to join the beleaguered garrison that the dead were heaped all over the main building.

Impressive sight was the body of Travis, surrounded by the corpses of fifteen Mexicans, whom he had slain before death embraced him in turn. Small wonder that thereafter the thought of the Alamo nerved the Texans and that their battle cry throughout the war that culminated in the tri-

umph of San Jacinto was "Remember the Alamo!" For nearly a score of years after the massacre no repairs were attempted in the Alamo. The church building and the convent were then rebuilt to con-

form as nearly as possible to the original plans. Today, however, the Alamo exteriorly looks quite different from the Alamo of the massacre, but indoors there is much to remind one of the heroic battle against overwhelming odds. One crosses the threshold on which Crockett made his last stand,

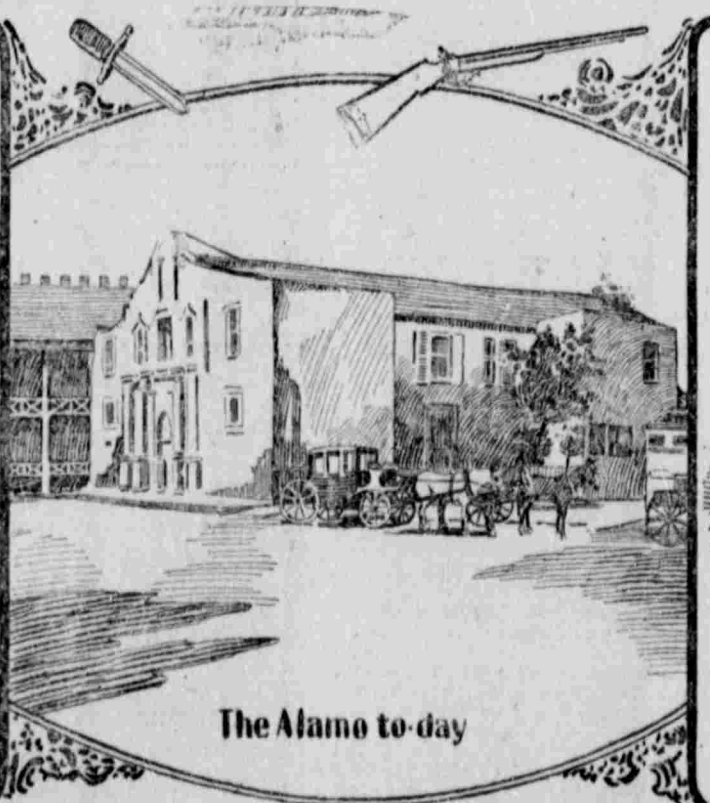
about the Alamo, stories that make the blood run cold with their details of rattling muskets, clanking chains, mysterious footsteps and the appearance in phantom form of Travis, Bowie and Crockett, once more revisiting the scene of their last earthly strife.

Only a few years ago the prisoners in a subterranean station adjoining the Alamo declared that they were frightened nearly out of their wits one rainy night by the sudden appearance of three figures which they had no difficulty in recognizing as the three brave leaders of the slaughtered Texans. One prisoner, more daring than his companions, ventured to approach the phantoms, whereupon, so the story runs, the three instantly vanished through the solid stone wall. That part of the Alamo in which the police station was located filled up what used to be a low space on the side where the Mexicans finally effected a breach in the walls and poured in upon the defenders.

WALTER N. WIDEBLEY.



Col. James Bowie



The Alamo to-day



Davy Crockett

fury of the contest. The arched roof, one of the greatest charms of this ancient piece of architecture, was destroyed, the walls were bruised and broken by the constant cannonading and the interior was blackened and

while the gutters were running with blood. In a room on the ground floor he saw the corpse of Bowie, who, lying ill and helpless, had been ruthlessly butchered. Not far from him was all that was left of Crockett, but the most

one seen on the walls his picture and the pictures of other of the victims, and standing in the little room where Travis fell, done to death in his noble effort to protect Bowie, one can readily believe the ghost stories that center

around the Alamo, stories that make the blood run cold with their details of rattling muskets, clanking chains, mysterious footsteps and the appearance in phantom form of Travis, Bowie and Crockett, once more revisiting the scene of their last earthly strife.