



OCCULTISM AND COMMON-SENSE

BECKLES WILLSON

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COMMON-SENSE**

**BY
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CONTENTS

Introduction

Chapter 1. Science's Attitude Towards The "Supernatural"

Chapter 2. The Hypnotic State

Chapter 3. Phantasms Of The Living

Chapter 4. Dreams

Chapter 5. Hallucinations

Chapter 6. Phantasms Of The Dead

Chapter 7. On "Hauntings" And Kindred Phenomena

Chapter 8. The Dowsing Or Divining Rod

Chapter 9. Mediumistic Phenomena

Chapter 10. More Physical Phenomena

Chapter 11. The Materialisation Of "Ghosts"

Chapter 12. Spirit Photography

Chapter 13. Clairvoyance

Chapter 14. Mrs Piper's Trance Utterances

Afterword

themselves off below the fingers, which are considerably indented by so forcibly holding the rod between them.³

"All the company stood close to Lady M. with all eyes intensely fixed on her hands and the rods to watch if any particular motion might be made by the fingers, but in vain; nothing of the kind was perceived, and all the company could observe no cause or reason why the rods should move in the manner they were seen to do.

"After the experiments were ended, everyone of the company tried the rods in the same manner as they saw Lady M. had done, but without the least motion from any of them. And in my family, among ourselves, we have since then, several times, tried if we could possibly cause the rod to turn by means of any trick or twisting of the fingers, held in the manner Lady Milbanke did, but in vain; we had no power to accomplish it."

The following is a remarkable case, and an important one from an evidential point of view. It is not known whether the "diviner" in this case was an amateur or not; he is now dead.

The Bristol Times and Mirror of 16th June 1891 states:

"The Anglo-Bavarian Brewery at Shepton Mallet needed a large water supply; accordingly excavations had been made to find water, but without success. About two years since, during an exceptionally dry season, it became absolutely necessary to obtain a further supply of brewing water; hence several boring experiments were made on the property. At the suggestion of a gentleman in the locality, the services of a 'diviner' were obtained, and although the principal members of the firm professed to have no faith in his 'art,' yet he was allowed to try the fields on the company's property, and those on the neighbouring estate, and discovered the well now used by the brewery.... The soothsayer who carried the divining rod, a hazel branch, was Mr Charles Sims, a local farmer, and a notable discoverer

³ Dr Hutton does not say how he knew that water was, or was not, below the surface. He was not, however, one likely to make loose and random statements. According to a footnote in *The Quarterly Review*, vol. xxii. p. 374, it appears that the ground chosen for the experiment was a field Dr Hutton had bought, adjoining the new College at Woolwich, then building.

