

*Each particle of matter is a register of all that has happened*

**Fragments of a retrospective dream**



From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (AN INTRO- AND RETROSPECTIVE DREAM) XIII pp. 290-95.

The Manuscript of this unfinished essay exists in the Adyar Archives. It is in H.P. Blavatsky's handwriting and was originally published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. L, May 1929, pp. 161-67. — Boris de Zirkoff.

## Prologue

Our truthful story opens in the good days of old, just five centuries ago — in fact in 1879. It was a century the history of which, as well as that of its successors, down to our own time, is too well preserved to us in its minutest details of names and events in chronological order that we should ever fear to commit any such blunders as those which make us often blush for the comparative ignorance of that age — great as was the nineteenth century. Thanks to the indestructible records of the daily Press, the time for mere hypothesis and guesswork has vanished for ever. For as the educated readers will all remember, it was toward the latter part of that century that, after a few foolish attempts to print the daily papers on pieces of cloth which, subsequently washed, were transformed into and used as pocket handkerchiefs by the economical bourgeoisie — as if ancient Manchester was not there to supply these mean shopkeepers! — that the discovery was made. Immortalizing the genius who found the process out, it was added to the long list of many others. It was — says one of our permanent records quoting such a paper which escaped destructive washing — found out by a preacher in love with his sermons and who was almost driven to despair at the thought that while his audience went to sleep over them, the rats might destroy it in their turn a century or so . . . <sup>1</sup>

. . . recorded, each one on a separate foil of the phonograph and Antitypon, they are now so perfected as to enable you, from the comfortable depth of your own armchair and seated at the apparatus table, at your summer residence at Sothis<sup>2</sup> Town, to choose your individual and then give the signal through your private telephone. Of course, your Excellency will have to specify beforehand the precise spot of the space around you where you desire the long bygone scenes in the life of the chosen individual or individuals to be enacted. As you are but slightly acquainted yet with the improved conditions required for the perfect reproduction of the deceased personages reflected by means of the Antitypon, the faithful retransmission of their voices and speeches through the phonographic foil, and their acts, deeds and even most inti-

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<sup>1</sup> This extraordinary discovery due to a young British astrologer, born in the noisy days of the conflict between matter and spirit, has ever remained the wonder of the grateful ages.

[This note is on the back of the sheet which ends abruptly with "so." Page 1 of the MSS. is missing.]

<sup>2</sup> [Σώθις is the name of a star that the Egyptians considered unusually significant. The star is not explicitly identified, but there are enough clues for modern scholars to be almost unanimous in identifying Sothis as Sirius. The Greeks called Sirius the *Kύων*, the Dog.]

mate thoughts by the newly constructed necroideograph, you must permit me to suggest that the most propitious spot would be in as distant a neighbourhood of your private biosideograph, as your own personal ideas might easily get mixed up with those of the deceased actors, or vice versa, and thus produce a confusion, strictly to be avoided in this age of universal restitution and . . .

[Part of MSS. missing.]

. . . and is returned to me again. You will then immediately begin to receive the full stream of the pictures and sounds collected by me from the depths of space. It will be necessary that a member of the Committee should take his place at each registering table, so as to receive and fix upon the sensitized reflectors the pictures and sounds pertaining to individual histories, as they separate themselves from the common stream in passing through the ethmoid diaphragm. As each individual history is closed with the scene of death, and such glimpses of posthumous fame as it may be desired to take in, the observer should detach the record from the repeating cylinder and lay it away with care, properly mounted and labelled, until wanted for exhibition to the General Council upon the stage of the Pantopticon for their final action.

The Australian or South Polar apparatus differs but slightly from the Borealian or North Pole which you have. Briefly, it may thus be described. Upon a table of polished rock-crystal and supported upon columns of migma<sup>1</sup> stand a large etheric reflector, an echograph or pantophonograph, and an ideograph — of which the first reproduces for us the pictures of the past, the second its sounds, and the third the unspoken ideas, whether of living or dead personages. The whole forms, as you know, the apparatus to which our Himālayan colleague has given the name of anti-typion. Connected with the reflector is a revolving zographistic cylinder, upon whose prepared surface the inflowing pictures, as caught in their slow cyclic descent from the rays of starlight, become indelibly impressed in their natural colours, and upon being passed in front of a pencil of “focalised ākāśa” or astral light, can be thrown forward into any part of the room, so as to appear to the spectator as a scene from real life transpiring before his view. The echograph, with like efficacy, will reproduce the voices of the personages who are marshalled before us in our retrospective panorama; care only being taken that the foci of light and sound shall be convergent. Though the flight of sound through space is less rapid than that of light, and gradually becoming feebler; is arrested and fixed at no great distance from the earth, yet as they travel in the same path, it is, as you are aware, a scientific fact that when we recall pictures from the ether, the returning current meeting the outgoing wave of crystallised sound takes it up by magnetic attraction, and returns to us simultaneously the images of the past and the vibrations of its sounds. The office of two of the three instruments above referred to, is to separate the one from the other. A delicate sense of touch and acute hearing are required in the observer for the proper adjustment of the pantophonograph. In our case until a number of preliminary tests had been made, the phonetic detonator gave back only a confused murmur of sound, instead of the desired clear articulation of speech. Members of the Committee, who

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<sup>1</sup> A new or rather rediscovered metal, mentioned by Proclus and other archaic philosophers, and possessing very striking occult properties, among them that of causing between the earth and any given star a powerful sympathetic current.

may have given little attention to astrognosical science, may properly be informed that, unless it is accurately known under what constellation the subject of an inquiry was born, so that it, or at least the stars that lay in its cyclic path and were thus brought into the influence of his current, may be caught in the focus of the etheric reflector, much time must be spent in searching for him in that quarter of the heavens where the general reflections of his epoch are travelling. While this principle of catoptrics was, of course, always known to occultists, physical science was ignorant of it until the comparative late epoch of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At that time a conception of the truth appears to have dawned upon the minds of several observers almost simultaneously. For example, a professor of geognosy — termed geology, doubtless because they discoursed more about the earth than knew anything about it — a certain E. Hitchcock, ventured an opinion that possibly the scenes transpiring upon the earth may be imprinted “upon the world around us,” and added that it was not impossible “that there are tests by which nature . . . can bring out and fix those portraits, as on a great canvas, spread over the material universe. *Perhaps*, too, they may never fade from that canvas, but become specimens in the great picture gallery of eternity.” This feeble, tentative prognosis should not cause a smile, for when we consider the darkness of psychological perceptions in that period, this must be regarded as almost an instance of psychic prevision. Again, among the phantasmic images floating into the penumbral circle within which the zograph projects its pictorial records, appeared that of a little pot-bellied sage with short legs, a chub-faced head, and wearing hair only upon its rosy cheeks. Sliding with pensive countenance into a huge armchair before his desk, he wrote the following words:

No . . . no . . . a shadow never falls upon a wall without leaving thereupon a permanent trace, a trace which might be made visible by resorting to proper processes . . . A spectre is concealed on a silver or glassy surface until, by our necromancy, we make it come forth into the visible world . . . Yes . . . there exist everywhere the vestiges of all our acts, silhouettes of whatever we have done!

This was a paragraph from a work entitled, *The Conflict between Religion and Science*.<sup>1</sup> Curious to know how far these prophetic glimpses were shared by the contemporaries of the writing figure, I drew into the vortex enough of the emanations of the period to furnish a general view. I was fortunate enough to catch the image of a work entitled *Principles of Science*<sup>2</sup> by one W.S. Jevons, who quoting approvingly the opinions of another sage, named Babbage, says: “Each particle of existing matter must be a register of all that has happened”; as both seemed, even in those ancient days of materialism, to previsionally apprehend that even unspoken thought once conceived, displacing the particles of the brain and setting them in motion, scatters its ideas throughout the universe, to impress them indelibly upon the eternal and boundless expanse of ether. That such views, though unpopular among men of nascent science, were the reverse among a very powerful, numerous and growing sect calling themselves “Spiritualists,” I infer from the reflection of a praise-worthy trea-

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<sup>1</sup> [John Wm. Draper, *History of the Conflict, etc.* London & New York, 1878 (8<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 132-33]

<sup>2</sup> [See p. 757 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Macmillan & Co., 1924]

tise entitled, *The Unseen Universe*, which the authors<sup>1</sup> — two British sages — felt compelled in their modesty to publish anonymously, doubtless to protect themselves from the overwhelming admirations and caresses of an enthusiastic crowd of “medi-as.”<sup>2</sup>

These above-named sages, after having first constructed a hypothetical “bridge” upon strictly architectural principles between the seen and the unseen universes, immediately demolished it as their intuition unfolded, by confessing that “when energy is carried from matter into ether, it is carried from the visible into the invisible universe, and vice versa,” in short, admitting that which is now practically taught by our demonstrators of psycho-astrognosy to the young children in the lowest classes of our elementary schools. We noticed further that *The Unseen Universe* of the two British philosophers was immediately followed by another work, *The Unseen World*,<sup>3</sup> written by a sage of the Western Hemisphere, the Atlantean Continent (ancient America). He being an enthusiastic Evolutionist and feeling impelled to prove to an ignorant and unappreciative public the axiomatic anthropological truth that man evolved from the race of the Āryan Hanumān, made haste to practically demonstrate at least his own descent by aping the then popular title, and making it a cover under which to give circulation to his own views.

[Here ends the MSS.]



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<sup>1</sup> [P.G. Tait & Stuart Balfour (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), London, 1876]

<sup>2</sup> This latter term must not be taken to signify either mediocre persons nor any intervening substance, but to indicate a certain class of individuals — mostly professional — of that century who kindly took upon themselves the trouble of furnishing their organisms for the indiscriminate use of those who had none; to wit, the larvae, those undomesticated etheric loungers who infest the electro-magnetic currents nearer to the earth’s surface, and whom we use as inferior messengers.

<sup>3</sup> [John Fiske, many editions]