

**THE ICELANDIC
PHYSICAL MEDIUM
INDRIDI INDRIDASON**

by

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Indridi Indridason (1883-1912), the Icelandic physical medium. His mediumship started in 1905 and came to an untimely end in 1909 because of illness.

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FOREWORD

It is with much satisfaction that we here present to our readers this scholarly treatise on a major physical medium, who belongs to the age of the great mediums, yet is hardly known at all outside his native Iceland. During the four years of intensive testing to which he was subjected, he produced, ostensibly, all the classic phenomena associated with physical mediumship: loud raps, the levitation of furniture, self-levitations, strong breezes, luminous phenomena, unaccountable odours, direct voices, apports, the remote playing of musical instruments and—perhaps most mind-boggling of all—some full-form materializations. There is also one episode described here when Indridason appears to have undergone a temporary dematerialization of his own left arm! At another stage of his career he became the focus and target of a peculiarly violent and threatening poltergeist disturbance. All this is the more remarkable when we learn that, prior to his discovery in 1905, there had been no known mediums in Iceland of any description. It is tantalizing to speculate on what the consequences for psychical research might have been had Indridason not died in 1912 at the early age of 29. No doubt he would have toured the mainland of Europe, where he would have been investigated by researchers with the ample experience of dealing with physical mediums that his Icelandic investigators lacked.

What every reader would most like to know, of course, is whether these astonishing performances were all that they purported to be, or whether Indridason went to his early grave still laughing at the gullibility of his countrymen. All we can say for certain is that his investigators, after much heart-searching, came unanimously to the conclusion that the events they had witnessed were indeed truly inexplicable in any conventional sense. Likewise, the authors of this monograph, after examining the case in depth, leave us in little doubt that they consider that the positive verdict of the original investigative team was justified. We must nevertheless point out that the *imprimatur* of this Society carries with it no endorsement of opinions expressed by any author; since, as we have constantly to reiterate, the Society as such holds no corporate view on any topic. All the same, we feel confident in saying that those who are intent on disbelieving and, if possible, discrediting all claims of paranormality are likely to find this case a tough nut to crack. However, criticism is always welcome and, if anyone has any serious suggestions to offer as to how Indridason might have 'got away with it', we urge him or her to write to the *Journal*; believing as we do that controversy plays an important part in the search for truth.

Obviously there are some glaring weaknesses in this case, even when compared with contemporary cases of a similar kind elsewhere. The

most serious example is that, with rare exceptions, the séances had to proceed in darkness. In all other respects Indridason was far more docile and co-operative than any medium would be today; yet he (or, should one say, his control personalities?) insisted on darkness, apart from the occasional striking of a match when permission was given. Similarly, flashlight photography, which played such an important part in the investigation of other mediums of that era, such as Eusapia Palladino, Marthe Béraud or Kathleen Goligher, is almost entirely absent in this case. The fact remains, however, that within these constraints these pioneer Icelandic investigators did just about everything that was humanly possible to make sure that they were not being tricked. For what clearly emerges from this account is that the individuals who made up the investigative team were all persons of repute and high standing in the community. We are not dealing here with a bunch of confirmed spiritualists intent on propagating their creed at any cost! Of particular importance in this affair is Gudmundur Hannesson, who in 1908 took charge of the investigation. He was Professor of Medicine at the University of Iceland from 1911 to 1946; he was twice President of the University and was for a time a member of the Reykjavik City Council. The authors tell us that he "had a greater reputation as a scientist in Iceland than any of his contemporaries and was known for his integrity and impartiality". He chose as his assistant Bjorn Olafsson, an ophthalmic surgeon. Both these men of science approached their task in a sceptical frame of mind, but neither was afraid to admit in the end that they could find no evidence that they were being deceived.

A word now about the authors. Loftur Gissurarson is currently working for his Ph.D. under Professor Robert Morris of the Koestler Chair, University of Edinburgh, on an experimental project involving computers and PK. He graduated in psychology from the University of Iceland, where he studied under Dr. Erlendur Haraldsson. It was Haraldsson who suggested the case of Indridason as a topic for his B.A. thesis, on which the present monograph is based. His co-author will be familiar to readers of the *Journal* but, more than that, one can say with confidence that he is one of the world's leading authorities on parapsychology and the paranormal. Among his numerous publications are the books, *At the Hour of Death* (1977), a study of deathbed visions which he co-authored with Karlis Osis, and, most recently, *Miracles are my Visiting Cards* (1987), a study of the alleged paranormal phenomena associated with the Indian religious leader, Sathya Sai Baba.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Halldor Laxdal of Radiobudin of Reykjavik, whose generosity has made this publication possible.

The EDITOR

INTRODUCTION

This monograph deals with the mediumship of Indridi Indridason (1883-1912), who was investigated and tested extensively by members of the Experimental Society in Reykjavik, Iceland. Remarkable psychokinetic and mediumistic phenomena are described in detail in contemporary reports, from the beginning of Indridason's mediumship in 1905 to its end in June 1909. These phenomena, some of which occurred in full light, comprised movements and levitations of various objects, of furniture and of the medium himself, knocks on walls and clicks in the air, odour and light phenomena, materialisations of human forms, 'invisible' playing of musical instruments, apports, direct voices often singing forcefully aloud, dematerialisations, direct writing as well as automatic writing by the medium, and trance speech.

We probably have information about most kinds of phenomena which occurred with Indridason, and the sequence of their appearance, as there exists a substantial number of fairly extensive reports covering his five years of mediumship. The strength and variety of phenomena observed seem to resemble those associated with the famous Daniel Dunglas Home.

There are no reports to be found of any medium in Iceland before Indridason. Spiritualism was practically unknown in Iceland before his time, and the persons who experimented with Indridason were facing the phenomena of physical mediumship for the first time. All investigators and observers maintain in their reports that the phenomena were not explainable in terms of fraud.

Contemporary Sources Concerning Indridi Indridason

Four persons observed Indridason extensively over his short mediumistic career and wrote lengthy reports of their investigations of the startling phenomena that occurred in his presence:—

1. Gudmundur Hannesson (1866-1946), professor of medicine at the University of Iceland (from 1911).

2. Einar Hjorleifsson Kvaran (1859-1938), editor and prominent writer.

3. Rev. Haraldur Nielsson (1868-1928), professor of theology at the University of Iceland. He played an active role in the first international conferences on psychical research, which were the predecessors to the conventions of the Parapsychological Association.

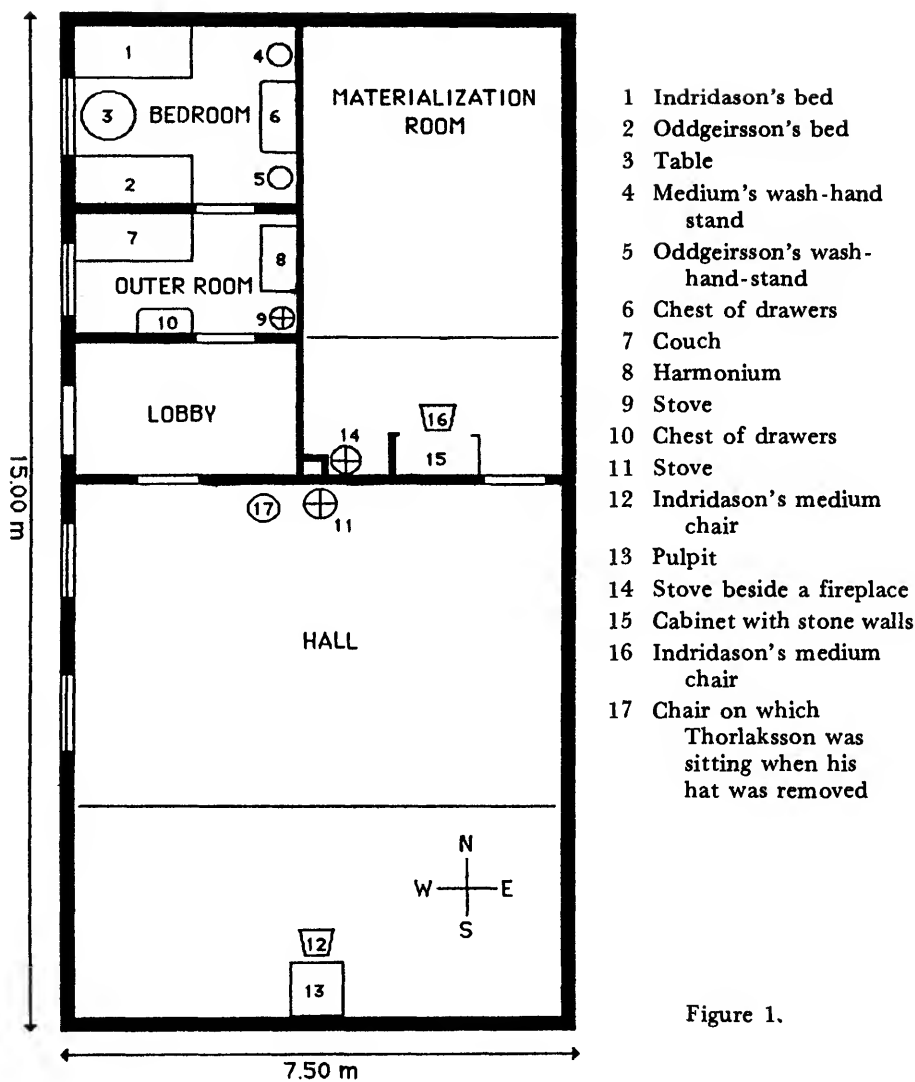
4. Brynjolfur Thorlaksson (1867-1950), organist at Reykjavik Cathedral. He used to play a harmonium at Indridason's séances.

Many of the reports on Indridason are available only in Icelandic, but some of the key papers were written in, or have been translated into, other languages (*see especially* Hannesson, 1924b; Kvaran, 1910; Nielsson, 1919b; 1922a; 1924a; 1925). In addition, Nielsson read papers on Indridason's phenomena at the First and Second International Congresses for Psychical Research in Copenhagen in 1921 (Nielsson, 1922b) and Warsaw in 1923 (Nielsson, 1924b). Short reports can also be found in psychical research journals reviewing these two international conferences (*see for example* Nielsson, 1923). A complete bibliography on Indridi Indridason has been provided by Gissurarson (1984).

The most detailed reports on Indridason's mediumship, such as those of Hannesson and Nielsson, are based on extensive contemporary note-taking. Hannesson wrote his notes during the séances, but expanded them afterwards, either immediately after each séance or the very next morning (Hannesson, 1908-9; 1924a). Nielsson used the same method, and both trained themselves to write in the dark during séances (Nielsson, 1924a, p.235). When appropriate they obtained written testimony from persons observing or connected with the phenomena and included it in the Minute Books of the Experimental Society. But unfortunately these books are now lost.

Brynjolfur Thorlaksón's memoirs formed the basis of Thordarson's book on Indridason published in 1942. Thordarson independently interviewed many people who had been present at séances. Thordarson also referred to the articles by Kvaran (1906; 1910), Nielsson (1930) and Hannesson (1910-11), but more importantly he used the two Minute Books of the Society (from September 1907 to April 1908) which still existed in 1942. They were mostly written by Nielsson and Kvaran and authenticated for each séance by two or more sitters.

One investigator excels the others in the rigorous controls that he imposed in his investigation and in the quality and detail of his report. This was Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson, who was to become the most prominent scientist in Iceland of his time and was widely respected at home and abroad. He held in his lifetime many public offices. He was for example twice President of the University of Iceland; he was a founder of the Icelandic Scientific Society, honorary member of both the Icelandic and Danish Societies of Physicians, Director General of Public Health, Member of Parliament for some time, and more. In 1908 Hannesson requested permission from the Experimental Society to make an independent investigation of Indridason. He seems to have been known for his scepticism and disbelief in the phenomena. His thorough investigation lasted all the winter of 1908-9 and is described in the latter part of this monograph. (See the chapter, "Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson's Investigations During the Winter of 1908-9".)



- 1 Indridason's bed
- 2 Oddgeirsson's bed
- 3 Table
- 4 Medium's wash-hand stand
- 5 Oddgeirsson's wash-hand-stand
- 6 Chest of drawers
- 7 Couch
- 8 Harmonium
- 9 Stove
- 10 Chest of drawers
- 11 Stove
- 12 Indridason's medium chair
- 13 Pulpit
- 14 Stove beside a fireplace
- 15 Cabinet with stone walls
- 16 Indridason's medium chair
- 17 Chair on which Thorlaksson was sitting when his hat was removed

Figure 1.

A plan of the Experimental House (adapted from Nielsson, 1924b, p. 167). Independently, Thordarson also made a sketch of the House, which resembles Nielsson's in every detail. We have added No. 17 to the picture, as well as a few details to other items from Thordarson's sketch, which was made according to a drawing from the Building Office of Reykjavik and to Thorlaksson's and the carpenter's (Jon Gudmundsson's) accounts (Thordarson, 1942, p. viii, 3-8).

The Experimental Society

The Experimental Society was the first society in Iceland devoted to psychical research. Inspired by reading F. W. H. Myers' famous book, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, Einar Kvaran established an experimentation circle in October 1904 to investigate the claims of mediumship (Kvaran, 1906, p.8). This circle became a formal society in the autumn of 1905 (Kvaran, 1934). Kvaran was president of the Society for the whole of its existence, and it can be said that he deserves the honour of having started psychical research in Iceland (Nielsson, 1922 b, p. 450).

The leading members of the Society were keenly interested in research, and investigated Indridason right from the beginning of his mediumship in 1905 until he became disabled in 1909. (He died in 1912). Indridason is probably unique among great mediums in the way that his mediumship was discovered and developed by research-minded scholars and academics. Sittings were usually held once or twice a week from September to the end of June (Nielsson, 1924 a, p.233). Indridason was paid a fixed modest yearly salary from the Society and given free lodgings, and in return he gave no séances without the Society's permission. Shortly after his death the Society was dissolved, but in 1918 it was resurrected as the Icelandic Society for Psychical Research.

The Experimental Society was in fact founded primarily to investigate the extraordinary phenomena that took place in Indridason's presence (Thordarson, 1942, pp.1-2). The Society was not spiritualistic in the ordinary sense of the word, although many of those who frequently took part in the experiments believed in spiritistic explanations (Nielsson, 1922 b, p.452). Among the founders were Nielsson and Kvaran, Bjorn Jonsson (later Prime Minister of Iceland) and several other prominent persons in Reykjavik. In 1907 the Society had become so impressed with Indridason that they built a small house to be better able to study him. The building was on one floor, and had a flat roof and shuttered windows. There were two rooms for meetings as well as the two rooms in which Indridason lived. The house was always referred to as "the Experimental House" (see sketch of house in Figure 1).

Important Events in the Life of Indridi Indridason

Indridi Indridason was born on 12th October, 1883, in a rural area in the western part of Iceland. He came to Reykjavik at the age of 22 to learn typography. Nielsson (1922 a, p.10) writes that Indridason had never heard of mediumistic phenomena before he came to Reykjavik. His extraordinary psychic gifts were discovered at the beginning of the year 1905 (Nielsson, 1922 b, p.451), when by chance he happened to

visit a newly-formed circle (probably the first of its kind in the country) which was attempting to produce table-tilting and was invited to join. Kvaran (1934) describes this apparently initial incident as follows:—

. . . Then Indridi arrived. He was a printer's apprentice in Isafold. He was related to Indridi Einarsson and lived at his home.

Indridi Einarsson was interested in the experiments but his wife much more so. Once when she sat by a table [probably with others attempting to produce table-tilting] Indridi came along. She asked him to participate in that experiment.

Indridi had hardly taken his seat, when the table reacted violently and trembled. Indridi became frightened and was going to run out of the house.

From that time the experiments with Indridi started.

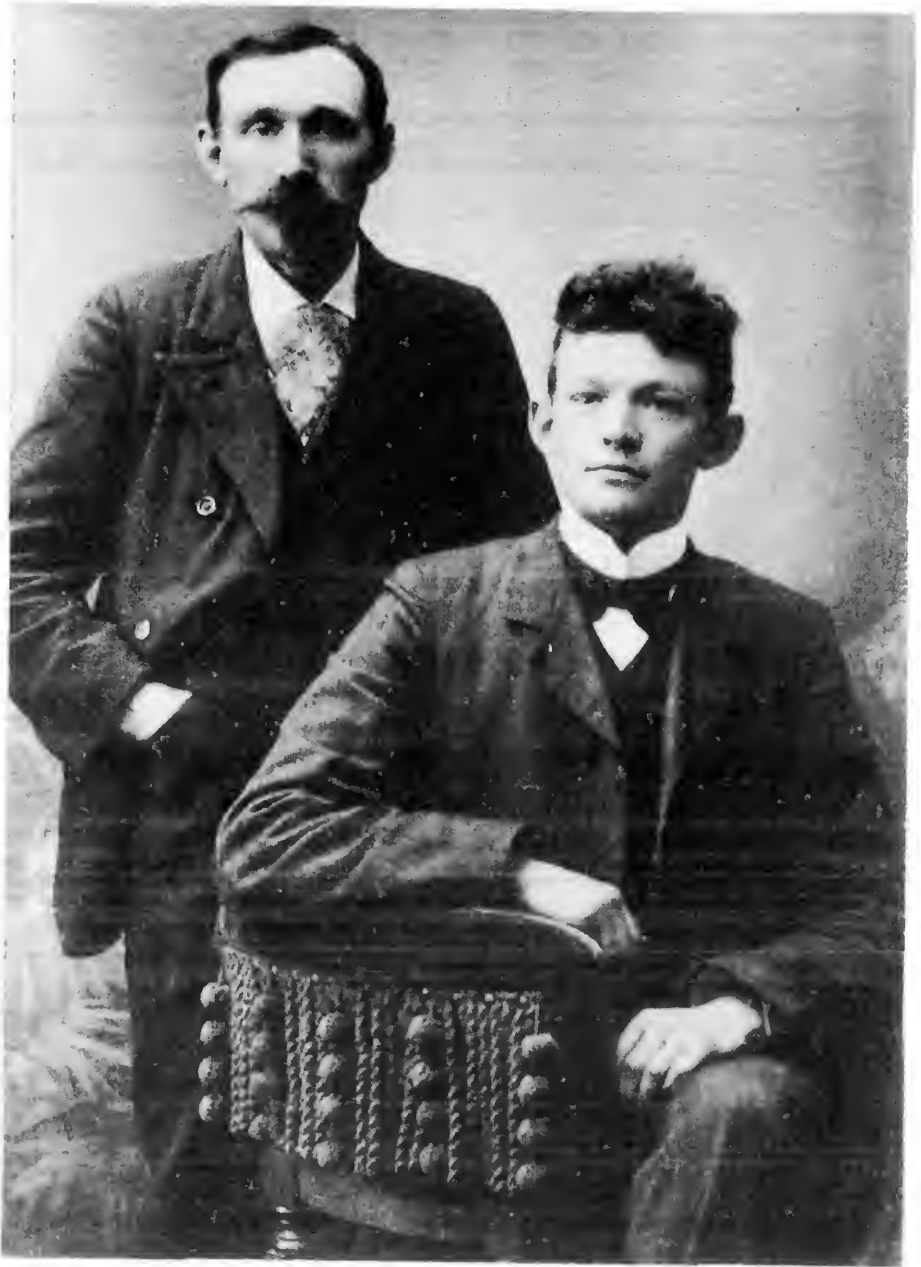
He came to my home and we sat down at a table. The table trembled, shook, and moved violently around the room and nearly broke. Once it was overturned . . . —*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*¹

Nielsson (1919b, p.344) writes that Indridason blushed and became almost frightened when he discovered what influence his presence seemed to have on the table at this sitting. The table apparently made strong movements as soon as he touched it. This was the beginning of a continuing series of gross physical effects that occurred more or less undiminished for nearly five years. Shortly after this incident new phenomena appeared. On inquiry the members learned that Indridason had formerly had some "remarkable visions", but no details are given concerning the nature of these experiences (Nielsson, 1919b, p.344).

Indridason was an uneducated son of a farmer and knew no foreign language except for a few words in Danish. Nielsson (1922b, p.451) writes that the young country boy had never seen a juggler, and conjuring tricks were at the time quite unknown in Iceland. During his mediumistic career Indridason was probably the biggest celebrity in Iceland, and he became a highly controversial figure: to some he was an object of scorn and derision, to others a source of the most extraordinary psychokinetic powers and/or a man who connected the living with the dead. Indridason himself always interpreted the phenomena that occurred with him as being related to spirits (Kvaran, 1959, pp.68-70), which he claimed to be able to see.

Indridason was the first medium that we know of in Iceland. He was primarily a physical medium and probably the only physical medium we have ever had in Iceland. According to existing reports, the vigour as well as the variety of his phenomena developed steadily from 1905 until they were at their height in the year 1909, when he held the last sitting (Nielsson, 1924a, p.235). Indridason's powers never decreased and he stopped because of illness. Apparently most of Indridason's phenomena occurred while he was in trance at séances but violent phenomena were

¹ Unless otherwise stated as here, the original text quoted was in English.



Indridi Indridason (seated) with an unidentified man.

also reported to occur when he was in a waking state. Furthermore, many phenomena took place outside the formal sittings that were held in the Experimental House.

In the summer of 1909 Indridason went to visit his parents in the country (Nielsson, 1922a, p.30). During this trip he and his fiancée caught typhoid fever, from which his fiancée died. Shortly afterwards Indridason married another girl, and they had one daughter, who died when she was nearly two years of age. Indridason never regained his health after contracting typhoid, and no further sittings took place. Later it was found that he had contracted tuberculosis, which resulted in his untimely death in the sanatorium at Vífilsstaðir on 31st August, 1912, when he was only 29 years of age.

A Séance in the Experimental House

A typical séance in the Experimental House during the winter of 1908-9 can be described as follows. The larger hall in the House (see Figure 1) could seat 100 people. The benches were in rows (as in a church), with the main door at the rear of the hall. There was an empty space at the front of the hall, and in the middle of the wall was a pulpit-shaped lectern. In front of the first bench stood a small harmonium, and in the empty space close to the lectern were two chairs and a table. Trumpets and a musical box had been placed on the table. At the beginning of each séance Indridason would sit down on one of the chairs, and the person who was to watch him sat on the other. Let us quote Hannesson (1924b, p.243):—

People seat themselves on the benches and the room is soon filled. Then comes the medium, a young, handsome fellow. He sits down on one of the chairs in front of the lectern, and beside him on the other chair sits a man who is to watch him when the light is put out, and report if he finds that he resorts to imposture. The President scans the hall to see if everybody is present and that everything is in order. Then the door is locked and the lamp is put out, but a candle is lit for the man who is to play the harmonium, care being taken that the light does not fall on the medium. All conversation ceases. A hymn tune is played on the harmonium and several among the audience sing to it.

... There is now semi-darkness in the hall; nevertheless we see the medium plainly. He is sitting motionless on the chair with his hands clasped on his chest, as people saying their prayers are represented in pictures [probably, as if in prayer]. After a little while he may be seen to make some starts, as if involuntary jerks. All of a sudden his head and his hands fall down and his body seems to become limp. He sits in a stooping position on the chair with his head drooping. The President makes a sign to the musician. The candle is put out and when the tune has been played through the music ceases. The medium has fallen into a trance and is unconscious. The hall is now pitch-dark and silent as the grave.

When Indridason was in a trance, several of his spirit control personalities spoke through him and greeted the sitters. Then the physical phenomena seemed to start. The musical box was heard playing a tune in the air, and voices were heard speaking through the trumpets in different parts of the hall. One person, called "the watchman",² was chosen to sit close to the medium, usually holding one or both of his hands and even his feet, so that he could report if the medium were to try to produce phenomena by imposture or fraud. Later on he was also apparently responsible for ensuring that nothing dangerous happened to the medium. This person was frequently Prof. Nielsson. As the phenomena occurred the watchman would often call out Indridason's position and say how he was holding him.

Indridason's séances differed in some ways from most séances held in other countries during this period—perhaps because none of those present had ever attended a mediumistic sitting abroad:—

1. The large number of sitters that witnessed the phenomena. To the best of our knowledge, in other countries the number of sitters rarely exceeded ten persons. Nielsson (1924a, pp.234-235) says that even though 60-70 sitters were present, direct voices were heard, the levitation phenomena occurred and so did all the other telekinetic phenomena. Hannesson (1910, p.208) writes that the larger experimental hall (seating about 100) was full of sitters at ordinary séances.

2. The sitters were seated on rows of parallel straight benches with the medium in an empty space in front of them. None of our sources explains why this arrangement was used instead of sitting in a circle. Between October 1904 and the autumn of 1905 (before the Society was formally founded), the sitters sat wherever they pleased in the room (Kvaran, 1934). Before the Society moved into the Experimental House, members seem to have been seated in a circle with Indridason in the middle.

Other séances were held for the so-called "inner circle", which consisted of a small group of specially chosen people. These séances, generally held in the smaller experimental hall, were to develop and "experiment" with some of the phenomena, such as the materialisations and the light phenomena (Thordarson, 1942, p.4).

Indridason's séances usually took place in darkness. Members of the Society seem to have tried a red light a few times, but it was abandoned because it caused the phenomena to diminish (Nielsson, 1922b, p.452). However, many violent phenomena were reported to have taken place in full light outside of Indridason's sittings. These occurred during what

² Since our English references use the word 'watchman' for the person who held Indridason's limbs during séances (Hannesson, 1924b; Nielsson, 1922b), we prefer to use it instead of terms like 'controller' or 'observer'.

seemed to be poltergeist outbreaks in the winter of 1907-8 (Nielsson, 1925; 1930). Furthermore, some table-tilting séances (at which, besides table movements, knocks on the table were reported) seem to have been held in light (Hannesson, 1908-9, p.7), and various other phenomena were also reported to have occurred spontaneously now and then in full light (Thordarson, 1942). We have described the light conditions in the accounts of Indridason's phenomena whenever our sources have mentioned them.

In this paper on Indridi Indridason, we have concentrated on the development of his physical phenomena. We have not tried to give a comprehensive account of everything alleged to have happened. Unfortunately, the early reports frequently lack sufficient details of circumstances. Thus the first part of the paper, up to the description of Hannesson's investigation, does not provide evidence comparable, for example, to what is found in the classic investigations of D. D. Home and Eusapia Palladino. However, the latter part of this monograph describes séances in which various rigorous control methods were imposed by Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson when he started his investigation.

THE BEGINNING OF INDRIDASON'S MEDIUMSHIP IN 1905

The Experimental Society claimed to have trained Indridason as a medium. Some phenomena first occurred spontaneously, for example when the levitations of Indridason began (Kvaran, 1906, pp.20-22). Other phenomena, such as apports and materialisations, were only obtained after experimentation (Thordarson, 1942, pp.97-98). We do not have any account of how the Society's members actually trained Indridason, but apparently in the end they succeeded in producing all or most of the mediumistic phenomena they attempted.

Rev. J. Auduns (1948, p.108) states that Indridason seems to have had a potential for developing all the phenomena known to be produced by physical mediums. Several mediums, such as Rudi Schneider and Eusapia Palladino, suffered decreases in their ability to produce phenomena, but this apparently did not happen to the bulk of Indridason's phenomena. The reason may be that Schneider and Palladino were mediums for long periods whereas Indridason practised his mediumship for only five years.

In October 1904 Kvaran started to have irregular sittings with a small group of friends and family members, where they attempted to produce table-tilting and automatic writing (Kvaran, 1906, pp.8-11). Some automatic writing was apparently produced, but its content made little sense. At this time Indridason had not been discovered.

As has already been mentioned, Indridason joined this group after his first encounter with strong table movements described above. Very



Einar Hjorleifsson Kvaran (1859-1938), editor and prominent writer in Iceland. He was President of the Experimental Society, which was founded to investigate Indridi Indridason.

soon thereafter, in 1905, this group became the Experimental Society. The Society's members spent many months experimenting with and developing Indridason's automatic writing, table movements, mediumistic trance and trance speaking.

Indridason immediately produced automatic writing when he tried it (Kvaran, 1906, p. 11). It was difficult to read the writing at first, but it became easier to read as time passed. Finally he wrote with much more speed than he could normally manage when he wrote in a conscious manner—he had only written a few letters in his whole life, according to Kvaran (1906, p. 16). It was about then that Indridason's first spirit control appeared, probably through the writing. The control claimed to be a woman and constantly begged Indridason to seek God and "good manners" (*ibid.*, p. 18). At this time, members of the Society claimed some "proofs of identity" for deceased communicators manifesting through Indridason's automatic writing (Nielsson, 1919b, p. 344; Kvaran, 1906, pp. 12-16).

Indridason fell into trance for the first time at a sitting at Kvaran's home on the Saturday evening before Easter 1905. Up to that time mediumistic communications had been received only through automatic writing (Kvaran, 1906, pp. 16-18). The trance started when Indridason, while writing automatically, made some jokes about the entity that he believed was making him write. This seemed to cause some upset and the writing protested, "You should not make fun of me", and then declared, "Indridi shall now fall into trance". Indridason did not agree at first but again the writing insisted, "He shall". He then agreed and the light was turned off (we are not told why the light was turned off). A table with a pillow was put in front of his seat, and a small table on which were paper and a pencil was placed by his right side. He put his head on the pillow, and after a few minutes he lost consciousness and started to write on the paper. Kvaran (1906, p. 18) reports on this first occasion:—

He [the medium] wrote a few sentences with harsh jerks, and sighed heavily and screamed from time to time. He spoke with someone he obviously thought of as being with him, asked him not to treat him badly and expressed disagreement with what he thought was being said to him. Then, after about an hour, he was woken up, apparently by the same force that had put him to sleep. He was woken at our request; as we had never seen this state before and we were uneasy.

—Authors' translation from Icelandic.

Experiments with Indridason were continued occasionally until the summer of 1905. But, in the spring of 1905, Indridason became scared while in trance and said he saw shadowy beings; he cursed them, trembled and shivered with terror (Kvaran, 1906, p. 19). Eventually a personality claiming to be Indridason's deceased grandfather replaced the woman control and became his second chief spirit control. This

control was the first to speak through Indridason's lips (*ibid.*, p.19). Little further was accomplished with this personality and he soon disappeared and other controls took over. Members of the Society tested Indridason's trance state many times without prior warning, by poking needles in several delicate spots in his body—in his hands, on the back of his neck, in the corner of his eyes and elsewhere—but he showed no reaction at all (Nielsson, 1919 a, p.3). They opened Indridason's eyes to test his pupils' reaction to light, but there was no response (Kvaran, 1906, p.17).

In the trance state Indridason often spoke in the first person as one of the personalities who appeared. Also at this time he started to speak with great astonishment about his own body—and he would frequently do so later on—as if he experienced himself out of the body and was viewing it from some outside angle. Nielsson (1919 a, p.3) writes how Indridason in trance state often described this split perception (the split between observer and the observed):—

“Oh, see me and me. . . . You are there below with the body. The body is not me. I am up here. There are two Indridis. Oh, is it not strange to see the nerve [cord], which lies between me and me! The lips of the body move and they say what I say. The nerve [cord] becomes thinner, the further away I leave the body.”

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Nielsson adds that nobody at that time had heard of this 'cord' except Kvaran, who had read about it but had mentioned it neither to Indridason nor to anyone else. Indridason, during these experiments, was the first man in Iceland known to fall into mediumistic trance, so Nielsson doubted if he could have heard of it from others. Later, when Indridason's left arm apparently dematerialised, we notice again a similar split perception in his trance speaking.

The chapters that follow deal chronologically with Indridason's phenomena in order to describe the sequences in his development as a medium. Readers who are primarily interested in the evidential value of the reports on Indridason's phenomena might want to turn next to the chapter on Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson's investigations during the winter of 1908-1909. In the next few chapters, observations of phenomena are described: these are highly interesting accounts of extraordinary phenomena but do not provide such detailed descriptions of controls and conditions as are reported in Hannesson's careful investigations.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT DURING THE WINTER OF 1905-6

In the spring of 1905 the number of sitters became so great that the circle members decided to establish the Experimental Society on a formal basis. The members started to experiment with levitations of the medium, light phenomena and healing, and they attempted to get "proofs of identity" from alleged deceased communicators. Other phenomena reported during this period included levitations and movements of objects, knocks on walls and the floor, clicks in the air, dematerialisations of Indridason's left arm and odour phenomena.

Levitations and Knocks

Indridason was at the home of two friends in Reykjavik on Sunday evening, 12th November, 1905 (Kvaran, 1906, pp.20-21). Nielsson (1922b, p.452) reports that this incident took place in twilight and that three or four men were sitting round a table. Indridason's friends suggested that he should try to "lift" the table, and after a short while the table suddenly levitated very high and "bumped" into the faces of those who stood by it (Kvaran, 1906, p.20). Three men tried to keep the table down by force, but it was still raised from the floor and lifted up to the level of their faces. Additionally, the table lifted itself up to Indridason's and the sitters' hands while they kept their hands some distance above it but with none of them touching it (Nielsson, 1922b, p.452). Neither Kvaran nor Nielsson mention where Indridason was placed and probably no research controls were employed.

A new control personality now appeared, who instructed the sitters to have séances every evening for a while in order to produce further phenomena. This third control said he was Konrad Gislason, the brother of Indridason's grandfather, who in his earthly life had been a professor of Icelandic at the University of Copenhagen. This intelligence was to become Indridason's principal control throughout his mediumistic career.

The table experiment was repeated at Kvaran's house on the Monday evening, 13th November (Kvaran, 1906, pp.20-21). A small table on three legs levitated so high that it "bumped" into the sitters' faces (probably in the sense of 'lifted to their faces'), while they touched the table-top. The table was also raised to some height when the sitters held their hands together at some distance above it, without touching it. The sitters then tried with a very heavy table, which tilted a few times without being touched and once levitated completely off the floor. Unfortunately, Kvaran describes neither the research controls nor the lighting conditions.

In this period a small table was abruptly levitated off the floor and up onto another table. This happened twice and apparently without Indridason attempting to make them levitate (Kvaran, 1906, pp.21-22). The first time, Indridason was sitting by a table with two other people. He was not in a trance and his hands rested on the table. Then another table behind Indridason levitated and landed on the table they were sitting at. Kvaran reports that the three of them had their hands together, so it was "unthinkable that the medium could have stretched his hand behind himself" (*ibid.*, p.21).

On the other occasion Indridason sat "still as the grave" in a trance state and was speaking with an unfamiliar voice (Kvaran, 1906, p.21). One of the sitters placed his arm on a small table which was situated in front of the sitter's chair. He noticed that the table started to make movements. He pushed the table down but it was nevertheless "snatched" away. A few moments later, the experimenters heard sounds as if the table had landed on another, bigger table, a fact which was confirmed when the light was lit. When the light was turned off, the table moved, in the same manner, to its original place. "Those who were present assert that Indridason could by no means have transported the table by himself", writes Kvaran (1906, p.22). Tables also moved on a few occasions during "a brightly lit day" and in the presence of observers (*ibid.*, p.22). The tables even moved a "great distance" across the floor to Indridason. He was then "expected" to write something automatically, reports Kvaran (1906, p.22) without explaining further what is meant.

Nielsson (1922b, p.452) reports that at first the experimenters had sat in the dark during meetings, but afterwards they tried a red light. The red light seemed to reduce the power of the phenomena to a great extent, so they abandoned it. Nielsson further elucidates (*ibid.*, p.452):

In accordance with the wishes of the controls, who complained of the limiting influences of the light, we gave it up. On the other hand, they emphasized the importance of the greatest possible caution in order to exclude the slightest vestige of fraud on the part of the medium. That is why it soon became a custom that one of us sat down beside the medium and watched him carefully, placing an arm around his waist or holding one or both of his hands.

Most often either Kvaran or Nielsson sat by the medium (Thordarson, 1942, p.97).

Knocks on walls were heard for the first time during the third meeting in November 1905 while Indridason was in a trance (Kvaran, 1906, pp.22-23; Nielsson, 1922b, p.453). The knocks started in the vicinity of Indridason and were heard on walls or objects and sometimes close to the ceiling. They developed and moved around the room according to the sitters' requests. The knocks appeared as affirmative or negative replies to questions from the sitters. Kvaran (1906, p.22) states that this

phenomenon was checked many times so carefully for fraud that the sitters were in no doubt that Indridason could not have produced it by any normal means. Unfortunately he does not give any details of how they checked the knocks, or whether other sitters could have produced them. The knocks were also heard at the same time as Indridason was writing automatically or speaking in trance. Later, when the Society started to use a special hall for the séances, the knocks "increased" (Kvaran, 1906, pp. 22-23) (it is unclear from the Icelandic text whether the knocks increased in *strength* or *frequency*). They even seemed to come from the ceiling, which was about ten feet above the floor.¹

One evening, at the end of a sitting, only Kvaran and Nielsson were present. They heard very strong knocks or strokes (Nielsson, 1922b, p. 453). Indridason was lying in such a deep trance, according to Nielsson, that his heart seemed to have stopped beating, and his pulse was so weak that it could hardly be detected. "Then the strokes roared on the panels round him and replied very promptly to questions." (*ibid.*, p. 453). Meanwhile not a word came from Indridason's own lips.

The Period of Light Phenomena

Two new phenomena started during the fourth séance in November 1905. Clicks were heard in the air, as when fingers are snapped aloud, but with a sharper sound. These clicks were heard every evening for some time and they were heard to move all around the room. Indridason was observed to be sitting completely still (Kvaran, 1906, p. 23; 1910, p. 45). Nielsson (1922b, p. 453) writes that they had "obtained" peculiar cracking sounds in the air. These sounds moved around in the room in spite of Indridason's remaining quiet and in the same place.

The other phenomenon comprised self-luminous "lights" or light phenomena (Kvaran, 1906, p. 23; 1910, p. 45; Nielsson, 1922b, pp. 454-455). The sitters first saw them manifested as flashing lights or light spots in the air or on the walls in the séance room. The lights appeared to be mostly "tongue-shaped" (Nielsson, 1922b, p. 454). During the evenings that followed, the flashes grew in strength and had different forms and colours—some were white and others reddish. Just before the clearest lights appeared Indridason was heard to groan painfully.

One evening, at Kvaran's home, the sitters counted 58 appearances of lights during a single séance (Kvaran, 1910, p. 45; Nielsson, 1922b, p. 455). Kvaran writes (1906, p. 23):—

¹ Old Danish length units are used in our Icelandic sources. One 'alin', which is approximately 62.7 cm., equals 24 'thumlungar'; one 'thumlungur' is about 2.6 cm. As this is very much the same as an inch (2.54 cm.) and an 'alin' as two feet (61 cm.) these measurements have been converted into feet and inches on this basis, thus preserving the approximation inherent in the original text.

They [the self-luminous lights] had somewhat different colours; some were very white; others were more reddish. Once, during an experimentation séance at my home, 58 lights were counted. These lights were of various shapes: some of the lights were round, while others were oblong. They were of different sizes: some were small, about an inch in diameter, but others were stripes of light around two to four feet long. — *Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

During one evening Nielsson (1919b, p.344) counted more than 60 lights while Indridason was sitting in the middle of a circle of sitters. Tongues of light with different colours were seen at different locations in the room. The light spots developed into large flashes with a strong reddish tinge, which spread all over one wall of a large room. Nielsson (1919b, p.344; 1922 a, p.13; 1922 b, p.455) reports that later on the whole wall behind Indridason had become "a glow of light" (probably, a continuous mass of light). Kvaran (1906, p.24) writes:—

There were a few times when a light spread on a whole wall behind the medium, which was twelve feet wide and ten feet high. Sometimes it looked like a sort of net of light, with circular meshes: slightly darker circles around bright flashes. Again, the light was sometimes continuous, similar to the glow from a great fire. Those spreads of light were never as white as the small lights were, but were more reddish.

— *Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Often peculiar clicks were heard accompanying the lights (Nielsson, 1922 a, p.13). The clicks followed each other very fast. Nielsson (1919b, p.344; 1922 b, p.455) also reports that strong gusts of wind seldom failed to blow through the room before the lights appeared. The wind was so strong that the hair waved on the sitters' heads and the pages of notebooks, lying open on their knees, flapped vigorously. Three years later Hannesson (1908-9, p.9) also observed a strong wind blowing across the hall. Indridason's controls told him that the gust had "to accompany the light phenomena".

Kvaran (1906, pp.24-25) reports that the guarantee for the genuineness of those lights was:—

1. Lamps or equipment which could possibly produce the same kind of flashes, and as "different-sided" as those in the Society, were not available in Iceland. Only one kind of electric lamp which could produce flashes was available in shops: Kvaran owned one of these, but states that the difference in the flashes was obvious.

2. Indridason had moved into Kvaran's home before the strongest light phenomena began. Kvaran's wife kept Indridason's belongings. Kvaran states that he and his wife were familiar with everything that Indridason owned. Indridason had only one trunk, which could not be locked, and therefore he could not hide things from the Kvarans in their own home, and there is no evidence that he tried to do so. (The séances were being held in Kvaran's home at the time.)

3. According to Kvaran the sitters made a careful body-search of Indridason and also searched the room on some of the evenings at which most of the lights were seen. He does not provide any details.

4. Nielsson (1922a, p.12) states that when the light phenomena were occurring the sitters "kept a good eye" on Indridason, but he does not describe this any further.

From our sources it seems that the purported spirit controls were attempting to produce materialisations, the lights being a part of that procedure. The light phenomena continued until eventually, on 6th and 7th December 1905, there appeared for the first time in the light the full form of a man, whose identity was not recognised by those present (Kvaran, 1910, p.45; Nielsson, 1922b, p.455). Kvaran (1906, p.24) describes this:—

On two evenings one could clearly see a man standing in the light. He was slightly above average height, muscular, well built, with broad shoulders. His back was turned towards us.

Now one would naturally think that it was the medium that we saw in the light. I would assert that it was not. I was certain, at least the other time when this vision was seen, that the medium was in the corner, crying out loudly and screaming, some eight to ten feet from the place where we saw the man standing. The lights, as in all his major phenomena, seemed to cause him much pain. He began to shriek and scream when the lights were coming, and he continued to do so as long as the lights continued. They came in bursts, with small pauses in between, and during the pauses the medium was calm. After the séances he said he felt as if he had been beaten up.

— *Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Nielsson (1919b, p.344; 1922a, p.13; 1922b, p.455) reports that many members of the Society had first seen the materialised being (who later identified himself through Indridason as "Jensen") against a strong reddish glow, in the middle of the radiance which appeared on the wall. He himself saw very distinctly the shape of the head and shoulders of the being. These light phenomena were observed several times, but then ceased around Christmas 1905, and reappeared around Christmas the next year (Kvaran, 1910, p.46).

Levitations of Indridason Start

A new phenomenon occurred in November 1905, 10 days after the experiments started after the summer break. Kvaran (1906, pp.25-26) describes Indridason's alleged first levitation, which apparently took place in darkness, as follows:—

The medium was then in a trance, and suddenly he started complaining that now he was going to be "dragged". He was then "dragged" prostrate back and forth along the floor. . . . After a short while I noticed that his neck was resting on the top edge of a small table in

front of me. A few moments later another sitter noticed that his feet were resting on the living-room table. We were then allowed [probably by the controls] to light a match, and we all saw him in this position, with nothing else holding him off the floor. As we put out the match, he fell down on the floor, overturning the living-room table as he fell. One sitter noticed that the table raised itself again without anything touching it. The medium complained about the treatment.

— *Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

During the period when the séances were held in members' homes, Indridason is reported to have levitated sometimes up to the ceiling, which he touched with his head (Kvaran, 1910, p. 45; Nielsson, 1919b, p. 344; Thordarson, 1942, p. 13). Sometimes he even bumped his head harshly against the ceiling and complained about "pain in his head" after sittings (Kvaran, 1906, p. 26). According to Kvaran it was difficult at first to observe the levitations of the medium because of the darkness. But the noise, especially when he crashed down on the floor, resulted in complaints from neighbours, and at least twice the Society had to find another flat to hold their séances (Kvaran, 1906, p. 26; 1934).

Nielsson reports (1922 a, p. 12; 1922 b, p. 453) that, during a sitting in his own living room, a sofa levitated, and was carried around the séance room by apparently invisible powers, while Indridason lay prostrate upon it (probably in a trance). Even in the pitch dark, the sofa did not collide with anything, but was delicately placed over the knees of the sitters, who could then touch the medium. Afterwards the sofa was brought back to its original location, with the medium still in position on it, as if the "intelligent power" that directed these transportations could see in the dark (Nielsson, 1922 a, p. 12). Although this occurred in darkness, it is highly unlikely that Indridason alone could have been able to transport the sofa with himself prostrate upon it.

Kvaran writes (1906, p. 26; 1934) that on one occasion, when the séances were held in Nielsson's home, a sofa with Indridason on it had levitated and come down to rest "on the chest" of one of the sitters, who noticed at the same time that Indridason was lying flat on top of it. The sitter "held Indridason", who stayed in that position until the sofa levitated again and was brought back to its original place.

Thorlaksson (Thordarson, 1942, pp. 12-13) states that Indridason was once sitting in a trance state on a small sofa in darkness. The sofa levitated, with Indridason on it, and stood stationary at the "height of a person's chest" above the floor for "such a long time" that some of the sitters were able to feel carefully with their hands under the sofa and all the way round it with Indridason still sitting on it. Then it moved slowly down to the floor.

Nielsson (1922 b, pp. 453-454; *see also* Nielsson, 1922 a, pp. 17-18) has described attempts by the sitters to test the early levitations:—

In order to substantiate these phenomena, we placed him [the medium] in a basket chair, which creaked conveniently upon the least movement. We placed this at one end of the room and tight rows of chairs all across the room, so that any passage between the chairs was made impossible. Then the sitters—and it must be remembered that we were sometimes 50 or more in number—sat down on all the chairs, the light being put out. Very soon the medium was levitated in the basket chair a great distance from the floor—the creaking in the chair being heard while it glided, containing the medium, above our heads—and was eventually rather noisily deposited on the floor behind the chairs. Then the light was immediately lit and there sat the medium unconscious (in a deep trance) in the chair, in which he seemed to have been sitting immovable during this air trip.

These levitations increased later on, writes Nielsson (1922b, p. 453).

Around Christmas 1905 Indridason performed some “remarkable” physical exercises or gymnastic feats in a trance state, which were so complex and difficult that Olafur Rosinkrans, who was a gymnastics education instructor, could not repeat them (Kvaran, 1934). The Society members had the lights turned on while Indridason did the exercises (Kvaran, 1906, p. 38). These exercises, unfortunately, have not been described in our references.

A Case of Clairvoyance ?

Although we have limited ourselves to Indridason’s alleged physical phenomena, which were more prominent, interesting phenomena of the mental type were occasionally reported. One of the most interesting of these cases occurred on the evening of 24th November 1905, when a personality, who had previously appeared but not identified himself, introduced himself as Mr. Jensen (a Danish surname) for the first time through Indridason at a séance (Kvaran, 1910, p. 46; Nielsson, 1922a, pp. 14-15; 1922b, p. 456). Nielsson reports (1922b, p. 456):—

The first evening he manifested himself through the medium, he told us that, during the half-hour pause while the medium was being allowed to rest in the middle of the sitting, he had set off for Copenhagen and had seen that a factory was on fire in one of the streets of the city. He told us that the firemen had succeeded in conquering the fire. At that time no telegraphic connection between Iceland and the outside world had been established, so there was no means of hearing about that event. This happened on 24th November 1905. Next day I went to see the Bishop of Iceland, the Right Reverend Hallgrimur Sveinsson, who was my uncle, and stated to him what Jensen had told us, and asked him to put it down and be a witness, whether this proved true or not. At Christmas the next boat came from Denmark, and my uncle looked with curiosity through the Danish paper, *Politiken*, and to his great satisfaction observed the description of the fire. Both day and time were right. Jensen was also right about the factory. It was a lamp factory at 63, Store Kongensgade.

Kvaran (1910, p.46) reported the same incident in a lecture at the Dansk Metapsykisk Selskab (the Danish Metapsychic Society) on 2nd February 1910, as follows:—

He [Jensen] told us that he had come directly from Copenhagen, and that there was a fire there: a factory was burning. The time was about 9 o'clock when he came. Then he disappeared and came back an hour later [about 10 o'clock]. They [the firemen] had conquered the fire by then, he said. We did not have any telegraph at that time, so we had to wait to have his statement verified. But we wrote down his account and kept the document with the bishop. With the next ship [from Copenhagen], the papers brought us the news that there had been a large fire in Copenhagen that evening—in Store Kongensgade, I think—where amongst other things a factory had burnt. It also said that at about 12 o'clock the fire had been extinguished. As you know, the time is about 12 o'clock here in Copenhagen, when it is 10 o'clock in Reykjavik. —*Authors' translation from Danish.*

We found that *Politiken* is not kept at any library in Iceland, so we requested the Danish State Library in Copenhagen to look for us and see if there was in *Politiken* between 25th and 27th November 1905 any report on a fire in a factory in Store Kongensgade in Copenhagen. There was indeed a report there, stating that a factory in Store Kongensgade in Copenhagen had burnt on the evening of 24th November (*Politiken*, 1905, p.5). However, the report says that the fire had been discovered at about midnight, and that it had been extinguished shortly after 1 a.m. Nielsson does not mention the exact time of the fire in his report.

Mrs. Kvaran told Thordarson (1942, p.102) that the bishop had been chosen to be the witness and to keep the written document regarding "Jensen's" account of the fire because he subscribed to *Politiken* and they had expected the news to be reported therein if there had been any fire at all.

Nielsson, Kvaran and Mrs. Kvaran thus all agree that Jensen's description of the fire was reported to the bishop and written down almost immediately after the séance. The first news about the fire did not reach Iceland until around Christmas, when the first ship arrived from Copenhagen, as there was no telephone or telegraph connection between Iceland and any other country at this time. In November 1905 there was a time difference of about 2 hours 15 minutes between Reykjavik and Copenhagen. Thus, 12 midnight in Copenhagen was 9.45 p.m. in Reykjavik.

This incident resembles in a rather striking manner the famous case from the late 1750s involving Swedenborg, who while in Gothenburg allegedly saw a fire that raged in Stockholm at the same time—the fire being finally quenched at the third door from his house in Stockholm (reported in Kant's book, *Träume eines Geistersehers erläutert durch die Träume der Metaphysik*, cited for instance in Broad, 1969, pp.122-123).

Dematerialisation of Indridason's Arm

Perhaps the most mysterious phenomenon observed with Indridason started on 18th December 1905 (Kvaran, 1906, pp.27-32; 1910, p.45) when the sitters heard some creaking sounds in his arm while he was in a trance state. At Kvaran's home the next day, Indridason, while awake, wrote automatically about the serious concern the controls had about the experimenting séance that was to be held the following evening. The controls stressed in this automatic writing that the sitters would have to be very calm and quiet, otherwise the medium's life could be in danger. An "operation" would be carried out on him but he was not to have any knowledge about that beforehand so he would not be worried. At the séance during the evening, Indridason's left arm apparently became invisible and intangible for a while. Here is Kvaran's description, based on extensive notes taken during the séance (1906, pp.27-32):—

Then I shall allow you to hear what happened at the séance the next evening (19th Dec.). After the usual séance beginning, a song from us and a prayer from the control, the control seemed to go away for a while. Then the medium said:

"Hi! I'm glad to see you come. But what are you going to do with all those knives?—No, no, no!" (Goes into the cabinet). "No, no, this is not allowed."

The control's voice: "You be careful!"

Now for a while one could hear cries of pain from the medium coming from the cabinet. Then he came out of the cabinet and said, as if very unhappy:

"When are you coming back with it?"

Then the medium came to me (I sat at the back of the hall), handed me the empty left sleeve of his jacket and said with the control's voice:

"Take hold here, carefully! You can touch with caution."

I touched, but could not find the left arm.

The control: "Take the jacket and be careful! Take it from the right side! [Probably, start by taking the jacket off the right shoulder.] I will put him outside; the air is more refreshing there. [Probably, take Indridason out of the séance room.] I'm afraid that, if it becomes too hot, he will bleed."

The medium then went out into an empty room at the front of the hall and stayed there for a while. Then he came back in and went into the cabinet.

Then I was called up by the control's voice: "Would you see if his nose is bleeding?"

I asked if I could then light a match.

"Yes, but you may not have the light on for a very long time."

I lit a match and saw that it was not bleeding. The medium was lying on his right side on a mattress inside the cabinet. I checked again to see if I could find the arm. But the result was the same.

The medium: "Ah, where are you going with it? Where is it?"

The control: "Check now carefully whether you can see any phenomenon in front of you; perhaps someone will be able to see

something waved; my relative's arm, for example."

We searched carefully around us in the hall, but didn't see anything. However, two sitters felt a cold, soft hand touch their faces.

I was again invited to search the shoulder, and I did it as carefully as I could, but did not find the arm.

The control: "In time, you will see this in full light . . ."

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

The next evening this same phenomenon occurred again, and also one evening later during the same winter, much to the surprise of all the sitters. When the phenomenon occurred on the evening of 20th December, five men searched many times for the missing arm by feeling Indridason's body all over. They did this repeatedly, and matches were lit many times during the search, but no one found the arm (Kvaran, 1906, p.31). Three sitters out in the hall felt a hand touch their faces at the same time as Indridason was lying in the cabinet. Nielsson (1919b, p.344) was one of the five who searched Indridason that evening. The arm disappeared entirely, he reports, and it was not found even though a light was lit and Indridason's body was carefully searched (Nielsson, 1922a, p.19).

Nielsson (1922a, p.19) states that seven persons observed the phenomenon the third evening that Indridason's left arm disappeared. They shone light all around Indridason while the empty sleeve hung down. They were permitted (probably by the controls) to touch and feel him all round the shoulder. Unfortunately, they were not allowed to undress the shoulder and see it bare in the light. Kvaran (1906, p.32) says that he then observed this a second time, and became more convinced. Indridason stood on the floor and Kvaran felt from Indridason's "shoulder down along his side and back and the same on his front" (*ibid.*, p.32). He also felt "all around him and high and low over the trunk". He thought that with such careful checking he would have noticed the arm if it had been there. All the seven witnesses signed a document at the end of this séance, stating that they had not been able to feel or find Indridason's arm and were prepared to certify this under oath. Thorlaksson was one of the seven who searched for Indridason's left arm and signed the document (Thordarson, 1942, p.23). Nielsson (1919a, p.75) reports that he was also one of those seven who searched Indridason while he stood in full light without his left arm being visible to any of the people present. Half an hour later, the arm reappeared on Indridason. Nielsson helped Indridason to get his clothing on afterwards, "as the controls had pushed his shirt, waistcoat and jacket up above the shoulder on the left side [probably while "replacing" it], the arm hanging down bare" (Nielsson, 1919b, p.344).

Indridason's chief control personality, "Konrad Gislason", said that the levitations, light phenomena, physical exercises and dematerialisation experiments were preparations for the materialisation of human forms

(Kvaran, 1906, p.38; Nielsson, 1919a, p.19; 1922b, pp.455-456). Indridason does not seem to have been undressed while the sitters were searching for his left arm and we are not informed whether it was his jacket sleeve or shirt sleeve that hung down empty. It would obviously have been easier to feel and probe in order to find the arm if Indridason had been wearing only his shirt.

Reports of dematerialisations of a medium's body are extremely rare in the literature of physical mediumship. Aksakow (1894), the well-known Russian psychical researcher, reports extensively on the case of the dematerialisation of the lower part of the body of the medium Madame d'Esperance, which allegedly took place in December 1893 in Helsinki, Finland (for further discussion, *see also* Carrington, 1906-7; Hyslop, 1907). Reportedly the light was sufficient for the eleven persons who were present to see by, and five persons verified by passage of hands that Mme. d'Esperance's body from the waist downward had disappeared. A few more cases of this kind can be found in Fodor (1966, pp.115-116).

Other Phenomena

In February 1906, Indridason was suddenly taken seriously ill (Kvaran, 1910, p.46). The references do not tell us what the problem was. It was decided to stop the materialisation experiments. The Society then turned to healing experiments (Kvaran, 1906, pp.40-41). These experiments commenced with attempts to heal Indridason himself, and developed after that into healing others. Indridason disliked these experiments; he had no belief in himself as a psychic healer and he thought that this would be turned against him (*ibid.*, p.41). At this time light taps, such as a doctor might make during his examination, were reportedly heard on Indridason's chest. Those present held both his hands, but the taps or thumps continued. Similar thumps on his breast were heard while he lay in a trance very ill in his bed.

It even happened that a control personality, called "the Norwegian doctor", would, so the sitters thought, let clear knocks be heard in the bedrooms of those sitters he claimed to visit at night (Kvaran, 1906, p.37). This personality later revealed at séances what had happened, though these incidents were reportedly known neither to the medium, nor to other sitters besides the people who had been "visited".

In February 1906, while Indridason was very sick in bed, a strong, fragrant odour was experienced coming from his head. Kvaran (1906, pp.40-42) writes that Indridason could "not possibly" have had with him any drugs that could have emitted this odour. The odour from Indridason's hands and arms was sometimes so strong that it spread over the whole Experimental hall, and when he touched the sitters' faces, then

the odour would linger there for a good while. Indridason was carefully searched many times before the séances when the fragrance came forth, to rule out the possibility that he had brought some chemical perfume with him, but nothing was ever found. Each and every sitter experienced the odour, sometimes twenty to thirty sitters at the same time.

Many other phenomena occurred during healing experiments with Indridason. For instance, in February 1906 (Kvaran, 1906, p.42), Indridason was in a trance state and was massaging the back of one of his patients when Kvaran and other members saw some material or substance covering most of the patient's back (we are not told how the sitters were able to see the substance). It looked like "dried dew; in some places it was whitish grey but in other places it had a greenish gloss" (*ibid.*, p.42). Kvaran asserts firmly that Indridason "did not have any chemical like that on him and would not have had any idea how to obtain it".

Our sources describe one healing operation during this period in detail and we shall review it briefly (*Fjallkonan*, 1906, p.38). Indridason probably always "operated" in darkness. Before the operations he first went into a trance, in a matter of one or two minutes. The following operation took place at the beginning of March 1906. Present, besides Indridason and the patient, were Bjorn Jonsson (later Prime Minister of Iceland), Ragnheidur Bjarnadottir and Miss Ingibjorg S. Palmadottir. The patient, Jon Jonsson, had been medically diagnosed as having stomach cancer (*ibid.*, p.38). In the middle of the "operation" the sitters were allowed by the controls to turn on a light and bring it to the patient. They thought they saw a hole in his abdomen, nearly as large as a fingertip, and out of the opening flowed brownish pus. Indridason removed some brownish blobs from the wound and threw them into the stove. A little later a light was turned on again. The wound still seemed open, but it was smaller than before. A few minutes later light was again turned on, but no trace of any opening or cut could be seen on the patient's abdomen. This operation was done without any equipment or tools, and many symptoms of the illness were reported to disappear. The healing attempts on Jon Jonsson took about three or four weeks. During that time no medically trained doctor attended him, since he was expected to die "imminently" (*Isafold*, 1906, p.63). The patient died on 16th March. It was disputed in the local newspapers whether his death was caused by the cancer or by pneumonia which he caught shortly before his death.

Members began to experiment with "proof of identity" of ostensibly discarnate persons after Indridason had recovered from his illness (how long he was ill is not mentioned). The controls had said that the psychokinetic phenomena had to wait until Indridason had regained his health (Kvaran, 1906, p.38). Kvaran writes that "evening after evening, detailed

information about various subjects had poured out of Indridason, and it seemed impossible to imagine how he could have obtained this by normal means" (*ibid.*, p.39). It is stated that at this time Indridason had described many deceased persons, the farms where they had lived and the landscape. He had given topographical names, described events occurring to, and things in the possession of, deceased people, and so forth. Some of his statements were followed up and found to be correct, "but very few were incorrect" (Kvaran, 1906, p. 39). A communicator called "Sigmundur" told the sitters of events in his presumed life, and fifty items from his recollections turned out to be correct (Kvaran, 1934). (Our reference does not inform us how many this was out of.) Kvaran states that Indridason described items which were known to sitters and items unknown to them equally well (Kvaran, 1906, p.39).

MATERIALISATIONS AND APPORTS DURING THE WINTER OF 1906-7

During the winter of 1906-7 the Society worked mostly with apports, light phenomena and materialisations, which reached their climax, while other phenomena were put aside (Nielsson, 1924a, p.234).

The Beginning of Materialisations

Kvaran (1910, p.47) and Nielsson (1922b, p.456) report that shortly before Christmas 1906 sittings were being held in two rooms in Kvaran's house (one fairly large room and a small adjoining bedroom). During sittings in the large room, the smaller séance room started to become filled with very strong whitish light. In this light appeared a human being that purported to be the discarnate Mr. Jensen. He first appeared between the curtains (probably, curtains between the rooms), in the small room, and shouted, in a genuine and typical Copenhagen Danish accent, "Ka' De se mig?" (in English: "Can you see me?") (Kvaran, 1934; Nielsson, 1922a, p.20). The control personalities had said they required the small room for their own use. Kvaran's wife and Thorlaks-son say that Jensen always asked as he appeared, "Can you see me?" (Thordarson, 1942, pp.102, 109). Kvaran (1910, p.47) continues:—

Then Jensen became visible in the [self-luminous] light. In the New Year he showed himself in the living room, where we sat. He was dressed in a white, very fine robe, which reached down to the floor. The light radiated from him and we saw him in various locations in the room. Sometimes he stood very close to one of us. Once he stood on a sofa and behind his shoulders was something like a tiny sun on the wall. This was a very beautiful sight. Sometimes he stood on the chair-back behind the medium. Once he sat with the medium on his [Jensen's] knees. He

could not stay more than a few moments each time, but he showed himself several times at each séance.

—*Authors' translation from Danish.*

Kvaran (1910, p.47) reports that on one occasion Jensen appeared eleven times in one hour. Kvaran (1934) tells of an occasion when Jensen appeared and stood upright on a sofa, which was next to Indridason's chair. The light which radiated from this materialised being seemed quite bright, but somehow it did not penetrate far into the room, with the result that only people sitting closest to the entity could be seen in the light. On one occasion Jensen stood behind the chair in which Indridason was sitting. In the light from the materialised being the sitters could clearly see Indridason in a trance state. Nielsson (1922 a, p.20) writes that Jensen had:—

... showed himself after the New Year in the living room, where we sat, with the medium among us—do not forget that! The medium was in a very deep trance. The new visitor was dressed in very fine white drapery, of which many folds hung down to the floor; and the light was radiating from him. We saw him at different places in the room. Once he stood on a sofa, and behind him was a red light, which was similar to a little sun, with whitish light streaming out from it. This sight I shall never forget. Frequently he managed to appear 7-8 times the same evening in different places in the room. Many times we saw the medium and this materialised being simultaneously. But this extraordinary visitor could not be visible for more than a few seconds each time. When he had finished showing himself he tried to touch a few sitters with his hand, arm or foot, and he always allowed us to touch his materialised body before he dematerialised it again.

—*Authors' translation from Danish.*

Unfortunately, we are not told how Jensen disappeared or “dematerialised”. Brynjolfur Thorlaksson described the materialisation of Jensen. He says (Thordarson, 1942, p.99):—

... it always appeared as a luminous, beautiful light-pillar [we are not told the exact shape of this “light-pillar”], just above the average height of a human figure and slightly broader. Inside this light we saw a human form but it was not clear enough, for example, for the facial expression to be distinctly seen. This light-pillar was very white but with a little tinge of blue. It was very luminous but did not flicker. However, it did not radiate much light. We saw the medium when the light-pillar stood near where he was sitting in a trance although otherwise there was darkness in the room.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

The appearance of the light-pillar lasted only very briefly each time and was always accompanied by a low buzzing sound (*ibid.*, pp.99-100). Our sources say that Jensen “often” touched the sitters when he materialised (*ibid.*, p.100).

Thorlakur Thorlaksson, Brynjolfur Thorlaksson's brother, is reported to have seen the materialisation of Jensen but only during one séance

at Kvaran's home (Thordarson, 1942, p.100). He saw Jensen five times the same evening but just for a brief period each time. The light-pillar had a colour very similar to moonlight but was translucent at the edges, where folds could be seen as on clothes. Jensen seemed to be of average height but "hardly as thick" as an average man. His figure did not emit much light, but Indridason could be seen when the pillar was close to him. Jensen became visible in different places in the séance room and once on a sofa where Indridason was. Unfortunately our references do not include any discussion of the differences or similarities between the physical appearance of Jensen and Indridason.

Kvaran (1910, p.46) reports that at one séance forty people simultaneously saw Jensen appear a number of times. Three witnesses, Hallgrimur Sveinsson (Bishop of Iceland), the Magistrate of Reykjavik and the British Consul, were invited to attend a séance one evening in 1907 (Nielsson, 1919b, p.344; 1922a, p.22; 1922b, p.458). The Magistrate was later to become one of the five Supreme Court Judges in the country.¹ He undertook to examine the two rooms and the medium to prevent fraud. Unfortunately, no description is given of how he actually did his investigation. Forty people attended and "many of them" had to stand. But all these forty, among them the three "highly esteemed men in whose evidence people could trust" (Nielsson, 1919b, p.344), saw Jensen appear eleven times that evening in bright, luminous light. Nielsson (1922a, p.22) writes that the three reliable witnesses were unable to find any indication of fraud.

The bishop asked for a séance to be held in his own house, and séances were held at his home from time to time during a three-year period. The sittings were held in the bishop's library, and there the different phenomena occurred with even greater ease. Sometimes the control personalities brought Indridason, walking in a trance state, directly from the séance room to the bishop's home, Indridason at such times being always under Nielsson's close attention (Nielsson, 1922b, p.459). The bishop declared later that he was completely convinced that what he had observed was genuine.

Nielsson gives a quote from his diary describing the following events, which took place at 8 p.m. on 4th February 1907 (Nielsson, 1922b, pp.457-458):—

First Jensen showed himself three times, seated himself with the medium sitting on his knees [?]. I myself was sitting in the front row this evening and saw them both, so that I could discern them, especially the two heads and "Jensen's" arms as well. Then he appeared right in the corner close by the door between the rooms. He was clearly to be seen in white drapery stretching his arms along the walls. Then he was

¹ Nielsson is probably referring to Pall Einarsson, a Supreme Court Judge, who was a well known figure in Iceland at the time (*see* Auduns, 1948, p.106).

seen still more distinctly beside the stove; then clearly on top of the sofa; next most distinctly by the window at the other end of the room opposite the stove, close by my cousin, Miss Sigridur Bjornsson. Finally just above the medium, standing on tiptoe on the back of his chair, so that Jensen's head nearly reached the ceiling.

A little later during this same séance another being appeared, in the doorway, but only the upper part of its body was visible. Nielsson saw the white clothes it was wearing very distinctly. At this point several of the sitters felt as if someone touched them. Nielsson felt as if he was being pushed below his knee. This was followed by a firmer push. Nielsson leaned forward and felt at his knee a man's bare foot, which was slightly cold. He grasped it around the toes and examined specially the big toe and the nail on it. The foot then levitated and Nielsson followed it as far as he could stretch himself while still remaining seated. After the foot had disappeared Nielsson rested both hands on his knees. He then felt a man's foot step on both his hands. He felt the sole of the bare foot; the foot was cold and rather clammy. Finally Nielsson's chin was "slashed" by a foot or a hand and Nielsson felt as if two toes touched his cheek-bone. In his description Nielsson does not mention where Indridason was situated while this was happening.

Kvaran (1910, pp.48-49) writes that sitters had on occasion spoken with the materialised beings, touched them and been embraced and kissed by them. However, it is not stated whether these "conversations" with the materialised beings were of a responsive nature. Kvaran (1934) says that these materialisations lasted for a few weeks altogether. The lights that accompanied the materialised beings disappeared after the beginning of 1907, according to Thorlaksson (Thordarson, 1942, p.4). It was thought at the time that Indridason's poor health was the reason for the deterioration of his materialisation ability. After this period it seems probable that complete human beings never appeared again, but parts of human forms were often seen and felt. Thorlaksson (*ibid.*, p.104) reports an example of a typical materialisation that predominated from this time on. Rev. Sigurdur Gunnarsson was once at a séance with the inner circle in the smaller hall of the Experimental House. A hand materialised and was recognised by Gunnarsson as his deceased wife's. He claimed that the hand had a scar on the same finger of the same hand, and in the same place, as his wife had had. The hand touched Gunnarsson and then the voice of his wife reportedly spoke to him as a direct voice.

Apport Experiments

Thorlaksson says that during the winter of 1906-7 members had special sittings in Kvaran's home which they called "apport séances". Sitters sat by Indridason and guarded him while he was in trance and the room

was in darkness. Sometimes objects mysteriously appeared in the room seemingly teleported from other locations in Reykjavik. Thorlakssson attended only one such séance. At this, a viper preserved in a bottle of spirit was, he reports, allegedly transported through matter. Sitters heard sounds as of something being placed on the table which stood in the room. A light was immediately turned on and the sitters saw a bottle with the viper in it. After three days they managed to find the owner, who reported that the viper had belonged to a small collection which was kept in the attic of the owner's house. The relation, if any, of the owner to Indridason is not known. According to Nielsson (1919b, p. 350; 1922a, pp. 23-24), this type of phenomenon was frequently observed and it appears that Indridason became an apport medium at this stage.

One evening that winter, after Indridason had fallen into a trance, the controls told the sitters that they could transport an object from any house in Reykjavik through the walls and roof, and then bring it onto the table in the séance room. Nielsson (1922a, pp. 23-24) reports:—

After the medium had gone into trance and was therefore unconscious, we first selected the house where the object was to be brought from, to exclude the explanation that he [Indridason] had brought the object with him. We allowed the controls to choose between the house of a well-known medical doctor and the bishop's residence. The controls chose the house of the doctor because the medium had often visited the home of the bishop. Immediately afterwards we heard a very peculiar knocking sound, the like of which I had never heard before, nor have I since then. There followed a short pause, during which the controls informed us that they had now got the object out through the roof of the doctor's house. After a pause the knocking sound was heard for the second time, and shortly thereafter a large bottle containing a few bird specimens [preserved] in spirit landed down on our table. The doctor was immediately contacted by telephone and asked if this was his property; but he answered, no. The medium, who had come out of the trance state, again fell into a trance, and one of the controls claimed assuredly that this *was* correct. [Nielsson's emphasis]. He [the control] had himself taken the bottle from a yellow-painted clothes chest which was located in a room in the doctor's house, where an old man had been sitting engaged in conversation with two other gentlemen. The doctor was given this information, and by closer investigation it was found that the description was indeed correct. The doctor's father-in-law had been sitting in his room, where the clothes chest was, engaged in conversation with two strangers. The bottle belonged to a relative of the doctor and was now missing from the chest.

— *Authors' translation from Danish.*

From the report it seems that the sitters had selected the house where an object was to be fetched, but the nature of the object was apparently left open. It would have been interesting to know whether Indridason had ever visited the doctor's house and, furthermore, if the clothes chest in question had, in fact, been yellow as the control had claimed. Unfortunately, these details are not included in the report.



Rev. Haraldur Nielsson (1868-1928), Professor of Theology at the University of Iceland. He was one of the principal investigators of Indridason's mediumship and one of the founders of the Experimental Society.

One evening Indridason was himself reportedly taken through a wall into another room, which was locked and in darkness (Nielsson, 1919b, p.350). This phenomenon is mentioned nowhere else in our references and little information is given about it. Rev. Jakob Jonsson (personal communication, 1984) remembers that Nielsson described this incident in a lecture at the theological faculty at the University of Iceland. Tarchini (1947) reports a similar incident from a séance, where the sitters thought that an (unidentified) Italian medium had been dematerialised and apported from one place (the cabinet) to another (the séance room).

POLTERGEIST PHENOMENA DURING THE WINTER OF 1907-8

During the winter of 1907-8, the Society's work was mostly devoted to levitations and large-scale movements of objects; levitations of Indridason himself, flight of objects, knocks, and sitters being touched by apparently materialised arms. In addition, members were trying to develop the phenomenon of direct voice, and musical-box, trumpet and light phenomena. It is noteworthy that many of these phenomena occurred under good lighting conditions and no evidence of fraud was found. Often, during the psychokinetic attacks described below, Indridason was not in a trance.

The Society had a theology student living with Indridason in the Experimental House in the autumn of 1907. The following events were recorded in the Minute Books of the Experimental Society immediately as they occurred, and the records were attested by witnesses and signed by the president and secretary of the Society, sometimes further corroborated in written testimony obtained from members who had observed particular phenomena (Nielsson, 1930, p.171). During this winter the number of sitters at séances was sometimes as high as seventy.

At the end of September 1907, Indridason visited a clergyman living in a village in the Westman Islands off the southern coast of Iceland. While he was out walking with the clergyman's daughters, he twice reported seeing an apparition, about which he made some mocking remarks. Reportedly he saw a man in his shirt-sleeves, with a belt around his waist, first in connection with a lady they met, and then when they passed a certain house in the village. The lady lived in that house and her husband had committed suicide the previous autumn by drowning himself in the sea. Before doing so, he had evidently taken off his hat, coat and waistcoat, because these garments were found on the shore (Nielsson, 1930, p.171; Thordarson, 1942, p.24). The medium was reportedly ignorant of this incident when he visited the Westman

Islands. In the newspaper,¹ *Reykjavik* (1906 a, p. 185), of 20th October 1906, we found the following announcement:—

SUICIDE. Jon Einarsson, around fifty, who came back home in the spring from America after nearly one year's stay there, drowned himself in Westman Islands on 9th of this month (his clothes were found on the shore, but he had disappeared). — *Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

After the medium's return to Reykjavik, strange disturbances started in the rooms which the medium shared with the theology student, Thordur Oddgeirsson, as well as during séances. For instance, the light was turned off in their rooms in the middle of the night, and Indridason claimed to see the man in the shirt-sleeves whom he had seen in the village (Nielsson, 1925, p. 91; 1930, p. 172). At one of the sittings the chief control personality requested, through Indridason's automatic writing, that a prayer should be offered for "a certain person who had slipped into the séance". This was done and the disturbances stopped for about two months.

Nielsson reports (1925, p. 92):—

After this we got levitation phenomena on a larger scale than we ever had before. On 21st October the medium was carried in a wicker chair above the heads of the sitters, who sat in two tight rows. Phenomena of the same kind occurred repeatedly. Likewise the harmonium, time after time, was taken away from the organist, while he was playing it in the dark, and shifted out on the floor. Sometimes it was jogged along while at the same time the keys were touched or played upon by an invisible force.

The Beginning of Violent Phenomena

On 6th December 1907 an attempt was made to photograph the medium with a flash light to see if one of the controls would appear on the photograph. Only the photographer was present, which was thought to be all right, since it was the first experiment of that kind. During the photo session, the photographer said he had noticed an unpleasant influence: he had felt as if "power" was being drawn from him and that he was losing consciousness (Nielsson, 1930, p. 173). He heard choking sounds coming from Indridason while the photograph was being taken and Indridason's voice sounded somewhat strange. The result appeared to be a foolish attempt to deceive. The negative showed an arrangement of drapery but the circumstances pointed to a possible unconscious fraud on the part of Indridason. He seemed to have slipped out of the room during the interval of darkness, got a bedsheet from a

¹ We have referred to these publications as newspapers since they were so called in Iceland, but in fact they were all weeklies, usually only a few pages long. There were no daily newspapers at the time. These weeklies had continuous page numbers running from the first to the last issue of each year.

cupboard and slung this on a curtain pole to imitate drapery. Afterwards he attempted to get away and rid himself of something that he had hidden beneath his clothes, which was "obviously the sheet". However, Indridason seemed to have no idea of what had happened.

After conferring with Kvaran, it was decided not to embarrass the medium without investigating the case. Indridason was told that the experiment had not been a success, and he was asked to give a sitting to three or four members of the Society. Indridason wanted to see the negative, but was told that it had accidentally been broken, in order "to keep his mind at ease" (Nielsson, 1924b, p. 151).

On 7th December (Nielsson, 1925, pp. 92-94; 1930, pp. 176-178) the doors were closed from the inside as usual so that no one could get in. The séance, which lasted 5½ hours, took place in darkness, but some light seems to have come from a fire burning in the stove. The sitters who stayed through this séance were Nielsson, Julius Olafsson and Kvaran, who held Indridason's arms or had both arms around him all the time. Indridason was in a trance state throughout the séance.

During this séance the controls said they had discovered that the person who had committed suicide had played a dirty trick on them and had interfered with the photography experiment. They said that "Jon" was now at the séance, in control of "the power" and in the worst of tempers. They further stated, "Heaven knows how this sitting may end, as 'Jon' is now a semi-materialised ghost" (Nielsson, 1925, pp. 92-93). Then the curtains in front of the cabinet were roughly drawn aside, so that the rings were heard rattling on the pole, and loud noises were heard on top of the cabinet. Indridason was moved between Kvaran and Nielsson on the front bench. He then got convulsions and was thrown into Kvaran's arms, who noticed that he was trembling all over. Olafsson was sitting tight up to Kvaran on the other side. The wicker chair in which Indridason sat was thrown about on the floor, and a din made repeatedly on the cabinet's roof. Indridason's chair was repeatedly jerked about and finally thrown upside down and Indridason "thrown out of it" onto the floor (*ibid.*, p. 93). Nielsson (1924b, pp. 152-153) reports:—

After a pause an attempt was made to tear off my hat [gentlemen wore hats at that time], and something touched the brim of Mr. Kvaran's hat. I then took off my hat and held it in my right hand. In my left hand I had a stick, on which I was leaning. This stick was then caught and for a while pulled at, so as to get it behind me to the left. While this was being done, I had my right hand on the back of the wicker chair, and felt that the medium was sitting in it, and at the same time Mr. Kvaran was holding down his arms in the chair. I then shifted the stick into my right hand, taking the hat in my left. The leg of my trousers was then taken hold of at the back, a little above the knee, and my overcoat pulled at with considerable force.

Considerable din was heard on the cabinet top. The sitters' chairs were once more thrown out on the floor. The medium shouted to Nielsson to go to Olafsson, who had gone inside the cabinet to take care of the chairs. When Nielsson came inside they heard something being thrown and crashing down with a great noise. Nielsson and Julius lit a match and saw a coal shovel on the floor under the front bench, but the scuttle was lying on the second bench. It seemed that the coal-scuttle, full of coal, had been thrown right onto the spot where Nielsson had been standing (Nielsson, 1922b, p.461). Indridason never went into the cabinet, but stood outside, and Kvaran had put both his arms around him. (No exact description is given of the cabinet or its use in our sources.)

On the evening of 7th December, Indridason and Oddgeirsson had gone to bed in the Experimental House, with a lamp burning on a table between the beds. Suddenly a plate, which had been standing on a bookshelf in the front room, was thrown onto the floor (Nielsson, 1930, p.179). It came down in the inner room, the bedroom, just inside the door curtains. Indridason's bed was pulled about one foot² away from the wall. Indridason was terror-stricken, and Society members had to stay with him at night for some time, and all regular sittings stopped.

The December Assaults

Our main sources of information regarding the poltergeist phenomena that took place in Indridason's living quarters are three papers written by Nielsson (1924b; 1925; 1930). These are mostly based on accounts written into one of the Minute Books of the Society as they occurred—and “they were all exceptionally well attested by witnesses, as it was not thought sufficient merely to have the record of them written in the Minute Book and signed by the President and the Secretary of the Society; but confirmation in writing was obtained from a number of persons who were specially connected with the phenomena” (Nielsson, 1924b, p.148). Nielsson personally witnessed some of the phenomena.

Kvaran stayed with Indridason and the theology student during the night of 8th December. He lay in Indridason's bed by the north wall while Indridason and Oddgeirsson occupied the other bed (Nielsson, 1930, pp.179-181). The doors were carefully locked. A lamp was burning on a table between the beds. Indridason fell into a trance and through him the chief control said that “Jon” had gone to get power

² Some of our sources use feet when describing length. We have kept to this system when our references do so, as it probably refers to a length system similar to the British system (1 foot = 30.48 cm.). One foot equalled half an ‘alin’, or 3 ‘palms’, and half an ‘alin’ was 31.35 cm. See also the footnote on p. 72.

and this was very serious. The control ordered the light to be turned off, as it would do Indridason's controls more harm than Jon, who now had a more compact body than they had. Indridason then woke from the trance and wanted to get a light, but the light was not lit. One of Oddgeirsson's slippers, which had been under his bed, was thrown into a hand-basin which stood in the room. The other slipper landed lightly on Kvaran's blanket. Nielsson (1924b, pp. 154-155) writes:—

Next, the ends of the bed in which the medium and Mr. Oddgeirsson were lying (Mr. Oddgeirsson with his head nearest to the window and the medium with his head at the other end of the bed) were raised and lowered alternately and the bed shaken. The medium was lying on the side farther from the wall. He shouted that he was being dragged out of the bed, and was very terror-stricken. He implored Mr. Oddgeirsson to hold onto his hand. Mr. Oddgeirsson took his hand, pulling with all his might, but could not hold him. The medium was lifted above the end of the bed against which his head had been lying, and was pulled down onto the floor, sustaining some injuries to his back from the bedstead. At the same moment a pair of boots, which had been under Mr. Oddgeirsson's bed, were thrown at the lamp, breaking both the glass and the shade.

Indridason was dragged head first through the door and along the floor into the front room. He tried strenuously to hold onto anything he could, and both Kvaran and Oddgeirsson pulled at his legs, but he was still pulled along. Finally they managed to "get under his shoulders, which they had great difficulties in lifting" (*ibid.*, p. 155), and brought him back to the bed. Oddgeirsson sat down on the side of the bed in front of him. Indridason's legs were then lifted so forcefully that Oddgeirsson could not weigh the leg down. Kvaran grasped the other leg but could not force it down either.

At this point all three left the House and went to Kvaran's home, where some activity continued during the night in spite of all the lights being on (Nielsson, 1930, p. 181). A small piece of wood from a cigar box was lifted off the floor and moved four to six feet in the air. A book which had been lying on a table was thrown into a hanging lamp which was burning in the drawing room. Nobody was in there but the doors were open between the drawing room and the dining room, where all three of them sat. The book continued from the lamp to a card table standing by the farther wall of the room and hit a small lamp which stood there. The book knocked the shade off the lamp, knocked down two photographs which had been standing on the table, and finally fell on the floor. A plant pot which was standing in the unoccupied drawing room was shifted a few inches. The hanging lamp swung to and fro for a while. Knocks were also heard on the walls of both rooms.

The next evening (9th Dec.), a few members of the Society had agreed to meet in the offices of Mr. Bjorn Jonsson before going to the Experimental House to keep a watch over Indridason (Nielsson, 1925,

p.96; 1930, pp.181-182). Before the others arrived, Bjorn Jonsson was alone in his office, inside which an oil lamp was burning. Indridason was alone in an adjacent room, where another light burnt, the door between the rooms being open. Suddenly Indridason entered the inner office where Jonsson was, saying that he had seen "Jon" coming through the window. At that very instant two chairs standing at a large desk were thrown through the open door from the unoccupied adjacent room into the office. Then Indridason said he saw Jon by the farther window of the adjacent room beside a high book-case which was there. Immediately afterwards a large volume was precipitated from the top shelf of the book-case.

Later the same night (around 11.30 p.m.), Nielsson, Gudmundur Jonsson (who later became a well known writer in Denmark and Iceland; he changed his name to Gudmundur Kamban), Gudmundur Jakobsson and Bjorn Jonsson arrived with Indridason in the Experimental House (Nielsson, 1930, p.181; 1925, pp.96-97). After Indridason had gone to bed, he went into a trance, but after a short while, when the controls had spoken through him, he came out of the trance. During that night a small table standing between the beds at the head of Indridason's bed was lifted up and fell on his bed, making a loud noise. It had apparently smashed against the wall, and had broken into two pieces. Indridason's bed was shifted away from the wall, even though Jakobsson sat on the edge of it and Nielsson sat on a chair by Indridason's feet and leaned forward, pressing on the bedstead with both hands. According to Nielsson (1925, p.97), the foot of the bed was shifted "quite the width of a hand", but the head-piece much more. A cardboard box fell down in the inner room at the feet of G. Jonsson, who was sitting close to the threshold. Indridason said that the cardboard box had been under a couch in the outer room. At the same instant the lid of the box fell down on Oddgeirsson's bed, in which Bjorn Jonsson was lying. No other phenomena took place that night.

Thorlaksson stayed in the Experimental House the next night, 10th December (Nielsson, 1930, pp.182-184; Thordarson, 1942, pp.24-32). Oddgeirsson and Indridason went to their beds but Thorlaksson lay on a couch in the front room. Indridason fell into a trance, and through him the controls said that during the day Jon had collected considerable "power". The controls ordered that no lights should be on. Indridason then came out of the trance. Two candlesticks which had been standing on the harmonium in the front room suddenly fell on the floor. A brush, which was under a chest of drawers in the same room, was thrown into the inner room. Indridason screamed that Jon was there. Thorlaksson then came in and lay on top of Indridason on the bed. The table between the beds lifted up onto Oddgeirsson's bed.

Then the situation calmed down for a while and Thorlaksson returned

to the couch in the front room. Again Indridason shouted that Jon was coming. Thorlaksson came into the doorway between the rooms and received a splash of water in his face, while simultaneously a water-bowl fell in front of his feet. It had stood under the wash-stand four to six feet from the foot of Indridason's bed. Thorlaksson went to Indridason, who lay kicking in his bed asking Thorlaksson to hold him down. Thorlaksson again laid himself on top of him. At the same time a chamber-pot from under Indridason's bed was thrown into the outer room. The bed in which the two of them were lying suddenly moved about a foot from the wall, although Thorlaksson pushed with his foot with all his might against the other bed. At the same time he had to use all his strength to hold Indridason down on the bed. Oddgeirsson came to help, but the table between the beds levitated high up and came down on his shoulders. Oddgeirsson caught hold of one of the legs of the table and held it while he went back to his bed and pulled the quilt over his head. He then received continual knocks on his head from the table top.

Then they lit an oil lamp, which stood on the chest of drawers between the washing tables in Indridason's bedroom, and also three candles in the front room. At this point they had decided to leave the house. Thorlaksson was standing in the doorway between the rooms and Oddgeirsson was sitting on the couch in the front room. Indridason was standing up on his bed and beginning to dress. Thorlaksson was looking at Indridason and saw him suddenly flung down on the bed. Thorlaksson rushed to him but at the same time, he reported, a bowl, which had stood on the chest of drawers in the bedroom, flew towards him. It did not hit Thorlaksson, but according to his account it went past him, altered its direction and took a direct line to the south-east corner of the outer room, where it smashed against a stove which was located there. Then Thorlaksson went into the outer room and stood there. Again Indridason started to put on his trousers, and according to Thorlaksson (Thordarson, 1942, p.31):—

Indridi is starting to dress again and is putting on his trousers, but I walk into the outer room and stand there. Then Indridi screams for help once more. I run into the bedroom to him. But then I see a vision that I shall never forget. Indridi is lying horizontal in the air, at about the height of my [Thorlaksson's] chest, and swaying there to and fro, with his feet pointing towards the window, and it seems to me that the invisible power that is holding him in the air is trying to swing him out of the window. I don't hesitate a moment, but grab around the medium where he is swinging in the air, and push him down onto the bed and hold him there. But then I notice that both of us are being lifted up. I scream to Thordur Oddgeirsson and ask him to come to help.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Nielsson reported in his paper on the same incident (1925, p.99):—

The medium again started to dress, and having got his trousers on he once more screamed for help. Mr. Thorlaksson had been standing in the

outer room, but now rushed to the medium and saw him balancing in the air with his feet towards the window. Mr. Thorlaksson took hold of him, pulled him down onto the bed and held him there. He then felt the medium and himself being lifted up. Mr. Thorlaksson shouted to Mr. Oddgeirsson to help him. Mr. Oddgeirsson went into the bedroom, but a chair was hurled at him and fell beside the stove in the outer room. Mr. Oddgeirsson moved aside to avoid the chair and went on into the bedroom. Mr. Thorlaksson was then lying on the medium's chest. Mr. Oddgeirsson lay down on the knees of the medium, whose whole frame was in motion on the bed. Then a bolster, which was under the medium's pillow, was thrown into the air; it fell on the bedroom floor. Simultaneously the candlesticks which were in the outer room came through the air and were flung down in the bedroom.

Then all three of them stood side by side, and walked backwards out of the room in order to be able to defend themselves against more assaults. Oddgeirsson held the lamp with the light in his left hand and had his right arm around Indridason's left arm. Thorlaksson held his left arm around Indridason's right arm. Then they all saw a hand-basin, which had stood on a washing-table in the bedroom, come flying straight towards them nearly a man's height off the floor. Suddenly, when it came into the outer room, it altered its direction and flew past them and broke into pieces on the stove. Then they all rushed out. Finally, they closed the outer room, but Indridason said he saw Jon take a water-bottle and throw it at Oddgeirsson, who went out last (the next morning, Oddgeirsson's water-bottle lay in pieces on the floor). It was 2.30 a.m. when they left the house and went to Kvaran's home. Soon after they arrived there, small things were thrown down from the walls, and a table made small movements, but no violent disturbances took place.

Although Nielsson's account is based upon supposedly detailed description in the Minute Books, some questions will remain unanswered regarding this reported levitation case; such as, for how long a time did the levitation last, and was the window open or closed? Answers to questions like these were perhaps included in the Minute Books but there is, unfortunately, no way of knowing these details today. The reader should bear in mind that the main witness, Thorlaksson, did not become a member of the Experimental Society, nor did he start to attend séances, until after Indridason had been a medium for some time. He claimed not to have known Indridason before that time. There is no evidence, to our knowledge, that Thorlaksson was ever suspected of being an accomplice in faking the phenomena, and Indridason's phenomena were reported to occur with or without Thorlaksson being around.

Return to Ordinary Séances

In spite of the violent poltergeist phenomena, the Society ventured to hold an ordinary séance in the hall on 16th December; the previous one had been on 5th December (Nielsson, 1925, pp.99-100). On this occasion Indridason was carefully guarded all the time. A small table was hurled from near where Indridason sat right down to the stove, where it broke to pieces. The desk of the pulpit and the steps leading up to it, both firmly held by nails, were torn up and flung out onto the floor.

Because of his fear, Indridason was going to stay at Kvaran's home during the night of 17th December (Nielsson, 1930, p.187; Thordarson, 1942, pp.36-42). Present besides Indridason and Kvaran were four other people but Brynjolfur Thorlaksson and Thorkell Thorlaksson arrived later in the evening. Indridason went into a trance, and from his throat were heard choking sounds, and the spirit control asked for the lights to be turned off. Nielsson reports that now the intruder, "Jon", had gained control over Indridason's body and spoke through him. "Jon" mumbled and groaned and started to swear at Indridason, whom he spoke of "as a trained instrument which he should like to use at his pleasure" (Nielsson, 1925, pp.101-102). But, above all, he said, "he should have liked to be able to kill him and to do all possible harm to those in the so-called upper world" (*ibid.*, pp.101-102). Then the controls seemed to have found some means of expelling "Jon". A kind of buzzing sound was heard outside Indridason when the sitters thought "Jon" was leaving him (Thordarson, 1942, p.41). When "Jon" had been driven out of Indridason, the control personalities said that they had poured some substance onto Indridason's forehead in order to diminish Jon's influences. The sitters touched his forehead and said it had been wet as if by oil.

One night (probably some time after this séance) Engilbert Gislason and the brothers Thordur and Pall Oddgeirsson stayed with Indridason (Nielsson, 1925, pp.102-103). An oil lamp was burning in the bedroom and there was candle-light in the outer room. In this light the following phenomena took place. Nielsson reports (*ibid.*, pp.102-103):—

The medium had got into his bed when the manifestations began. The first incident was that a tea-cup, which had been standing on Mr. Oddgeirsson's washing-table, was lifted into the air and thrown down again with such force as to break it into tiny fragments. Mr. Gislason, who was standing in front of the medium's bed, observed that the medium had his hands under the quilt when the cup was broken. After a little while, the medium warned them that "Jon" was present and was preparing to throw his (the medium's) water-jug. Mr. Gislason then went to the washing-table and took hold of the jug which was standing in the hand-basin. The jug was then turned round in his hand with

considerable force. After a while the medium again said that "Jon" was moving about, and at the same moment the medium's bed was pulled away from the wall six inches or more. When the bed was pulled out, Mr. Thordur Oddgeirsson was sitting on his bed opposite the medium's bed, but Mr. Gislason and Mr. Pall Oddgeirsson were standing at the foot of the former's bed.

During an ordinary séance on 30th December, "Jon" was heard to speak outside Indridason with a direct voice for the first time (Nielsson, 1925, p. 103; 1930, pp. 188-189; Thordarson, 1942, p. 43). The steps up to the pulpit were pulled up and down, although they had been securely nailed to the wall before the séance and three men had unsuccessfully tried to pull them up. Eventually they were completely pulled off. Kvaran and his wife both witnessed this incident. A water-bowl moved from a shelf over the pulpit and poured water over one sitter and into his pockets. Then the water-bowl was put on a small table in front of Mr. and Mrs. Kvaran. A bell was taken off the same shelf and apparently flew around ringing, all over the hall, even close to the sitters' faces. One sitter was touched with a cold hand, and several others felt a touch. Unfortunately, no further description is given of the purported direct voice. Our sources mention the direct voice phenomenon for the first time at this date. Later on, it developed and became one of Indridason's most common phenomena. This sitting was probably held in darkness.

During a séance on 2nd January 1908 (Nielsson, 1925, pp. 103-104), there was present a medical doctor from the Westman Islands who had known Jon personally. Indridason was closely guarded all the time and he had both hands resting on the left shoulder of the physician, who sat just in front of him. Knocks were heard on the wall and on the harmonium. Benches which had been piled up close to the pulpit before the meeting were thrown on the floor with great commotion. A bell was rung and at the same time it touched the doctor's head. A chair on which one of the sitters was seated was pulled out of the row of seats. A table which was in Kvaran's care moved many times. Once Kvaran had great trouble in retaining hold of it and once he felt the shape of two hands on it. Nielsson's head was touched many times, and he felt fingers, as if a hand was coming from behind where the pulpit was. A pile of benches was heard being pushed about (this occurred five times). One bench came down on Kvaran's shoulder and on the knee of another sitter as they sat in the front row, and there it started to push against the doctor on the other side. The doctor's chair rolled as if it stood on waves. Finally both Nielsson and the doctor felt a hand touch them.

The disturbances continued, and reached a climax on 4th January 1908 (Nielsson, 1925, pp. 104-105; 1930, p. 189; Thordarson, 1942, pp. 43-44). The chair on which Indridason sat was thrown to the floor, and Indridason was lifted up while both Kvaran and the doctor were guarding him. When sitters were singing a hymn, it sounded as if a

human foot was beating time on the floor near to Indridason. Some of the sitters heard footsteps and whispering behind the rows, and many of them saw a big flash of light. Just after this, the chair under the medium was broken. Gudmundur Jonsson went up to Indridason to observe him more closely. Indridason clasped both his hands around Jonsson's hands. Then a rod from the back of Indridason's chair was thrown up high in the air. Indridason's chair was put together again, and he was seated in it. Nielsson continues (1924b, p. 161):—

While both the medium's hands were being closely guarded, the very chair on which he was sitting was totally demolished, and some of the fragments thrown at a big hanging lamp in the hall. The lamp broke to pieces—shade, glass and oil-vessel—the fragments falling down on Mr. Bjorn Jonsson's head.

Other pieces flew against the east wall of the hall. Bjorn Jonsson left then, with a few other sitters. A very heavy bell (it is unclear in the Icelandic text whether this was a bell or a clock), which had stood on a shelf over the pulpit, rang repeatedly at different places in the hall over the heads of the sitters, and eventually fell down a short distance from the door of the materialisation room. Those who sat by the harmonium said that they felt it being moved. Several sitters reported being touched, and one of them touched what appeared to be a hand. Various other objects were thrown around the hall.

After this eventful séance, Indridason went with some friends to the restaurant at the Hotel Iceland (Nielsson, 1925, p. 105; 1930, pp. 189-190). During the evening, he walked out into the courtyard, without a hat and coat, and did not return. His friends wondered what had happened to him and went out into the courtyard to search for him, but could not find him. At about 11.30 in the evening, about the same time as he disappeared, he arrived in a trance state at Kvaran's home without his hat and coat, speaking with the voice of "the Norwegian doctor". Later that same night there was a séance with Kvaran's family and Gudmundur Jonsson. At this, "Jon" apologised for his behaviour. From that moment onwards he was at peace with Indridason, and he became one of his most powerful controls. After the sitters had conversed with Indridason's controls, he emerged from the trance and wondered where he was.

We also have Thorlakur Thorlaksson's account of this and according to Thordarson there was an account in the Society's Minute Books. All these three sources agree that Indridason had gone out to the yard alone (Thordarson, 1942, pp. 52-53). Thordarson reports that the Minute Books say that the chief control, "Konrad Gislason", had described this incident, saying that the controls had brought Indridason "prostrate" in the air from the yard and over the wall, in order to give Jon an immediate opportunity to be reconciled with the members of the Society (*ibid.*,

p.53). It should be mentioned that a healthy man could have run the distance between the Hotel Iceland and Kvaran's home in a few minutes.

Brynjolfur Thorlaksson (Thordarson, 1942, pp.45-47) reports that Indridason, Jon Fjeldsted, Thorkell Thorlaksson and himself had been at the Hotel Iceland, and that all of them had gone out to the yard at the south side of the hotel, because the table they were sitting at began to move and the cups nearly fell off it. First they had tried to keep it down, but they could not control it. In the yard, Indridason disappeared from the group without anyone noticing. The yard was surrounded by high walls on three sides, the hotel itself being on the fourth side. The yard was illuminated by light from the hotel windows, and everything was clearly visible. The only door through the wall was locked, but the hotel door was located in such a position that they would all have noticed if Indridason had gone through it. Indridason was not seen to go through any door. They went home to Kvaran to announce Indridason's disappearance, only to be informed that Indridason had already arrived in his trance state—at nearly the same minute as they had noticed his disappearance from the yard. Indridason claimed that he was not aware of anything until he emerged from the trance at Kvaran's house.

Development of Direct Voices

Nielsson (1925, p.106) reports that it was not until 11th January that a communicator by the name of Sigmundur succeeded for the first time during a séance in making himself distinctly heard as a clear direct voice some distance away from Indridason. Nielsson reports (*ibid.*, p.106):—

It is worth noting that so far direct voices had very seldom been heard at our séances, and also were very faint. Even in this "Jon" excelled all others. It was not until 11th January 1908 that "Sigmund", who became the foremost of the others in this respect, succeeded in making himself distinctly heard as a direct voice at some distance from the medium.

During a séance in the small hall on 7th February, the walls of the cabinet quavered and caved in (Thordarson, 1942, p.109). Some sitters heard the benches they were sitting on shiver. A bright light appeared and after a short while the cabinet looked as if it was standing in "luminous flames". Many sitters saw Indridason clearly inside the cabinet behind the curtains. A loud knock was heard, and then a voice asked in Danish, "Can you see me?". And after a short while the voice said, "I'm standing here outside", but nothing could be seen. The voice seemed to originate out on the floor in front of the cabinet.

During a séance on 24th February, a trumpet (or a megaphone) was used for the first time (Nielsson, 1924b, p.163). The controls spoke through it and it was moved around the hall at what Nielsson refers to

as "a tremendous speed". Nielsson does not mention where Indridason was during this. During a séance on 28th February, Jon's voice was heard speaking through the trumpet as it swung in the air from one wall to another in the hall, which was 24 feet across and 12 feet high. The trumpet was also heard knocking against the ceiling (Nielsson, 1930, p.192).

On 4th March a much larger trumpet, which rested on an iron stand, was used. Nielsson (1924b, p.164) reports:—

When we were about half-way through the sitting, Jon greeted people in all directions through the small megaphone. The deaf medical man asked who was there. Jon then shouted through the megaphone: "Don't you, the ship-owner, know me?" This medical man had owned some fishing boats at the time when Jon was acquainted with him. Somebody then asked whether Jon could speak through the megaphone from the door [behind the sitters at the northern side of the hall]. The large megaphone was then taken from the stand [it was probably placed at the southern side, inner end, of the hall] and carried above the heads of the sitters down the hall. The sitters commenced singing and while they were doing so Jon shouted: "I lost it! I lost it! I lost it!" and then bid us good-bye. The megaphone had come slowly down on the people who were sitting on the western side of the hall.

Sometimes the trumpet moved from its place and the larger end of it was placed to the ear of a sitter and there spoken through. At the next moment it would be taken to another sitter's ear, far away from the first one, and spoken through there also. Sometimes the swinging of the trumpets was so acrobatic "that it was as if spoken in the ears of several sitters at the same moment, through the same trumpet" (Thordarson, 1942, p.112). Often a musical box was wound up without apparently being touched, and then levitated and circled around the hall all the way to the ceiling while playing (*ibid.*). According to Kvaran's wife the musical box weighed 50 pounds (*ibid.*).

Many conversations took place between Jon and a communicator who claimed to be Hallgrímur Petursson (a famous 17-century Icelandic religious poet), in such a way that Petursson spoke through Indridason but Jon answered as a direct voice (Thordarson, 1942, p.53). Several of our sources report that Jon also conversed with sitters as a direct voice "like one man to another" (*ibid.*; see also Hannesson, 1951, pp.27-28; Kvaran, 1934; Nielsson, 1922b, p.459; 1925, pp.108-109). Nielsson reports for example that, when he was walking with the entranced Indridason to the bishop's home, the controls had talked to Nielsson from the medium's lips and sometimes one of the other controls had spoken as a direct voice in the air around them "in the dark of the street" (Nielsson, 1922b, p.459).

The physician from the Westman Islands gave Nielsson a written statement dated 14th March 1908 (Nielsson, 1925, p.109), in which he described a small experiment which he had done to see if Indridason

could recognise a photograph that he had obtained of Jon from the village where he had lived. He placed the photograph in one of his albums among photographs of seven other men of similar age. When he had shown Indridason a few albums, they came to the one containing the photograph. He also tried to distract Indridason by asking if one or two other photographs were of Jon. Indridason said they were not, and then put his finger on the correct photo of Jon and said, "This is the photograph most resembling him, but yet it is not quite like him as he has been when I have seen him." (*ibid.*)

On 6th April, during a séance with the inner circle, the cabinet caved in again at different places (Thordarson, 1942, pp.109-110). The bottom of Indridason's chair split in two. Then a light was turned on and "Indridason was pulled off the broken chair by an invisible force". It is unclear who actually saw him being pulled in the manner described.

On 10th April, during a séance with the inner circle, "knocks were heard in the cabinet like a flat palm being slammed down on a table" (Thordarson, 1942, p.110). Then flashes of dim reddish-yellow fire were seen a few times coming from the cabinet roof. Shortly after that, a loud rumble was heard as if something was collapsing. A light was turned on and the sitters saw that the whole masonry wall on the east side of the cabinet had collapsed, and the curtains and the pole on which they had been hung had fallen on the floor. The concrete had been reduced to little bits and dust as fine as sand. Brynjolfur Thorlaksson gave a second-hand account of this event to Thordarson, but Thordarson (*ibid.*, p.110) writes that the Minute Book, as well as Thorkell Thorlaksson, who was a first-hand witness, had both reported the event in the same way that Brynjolfur Thorlaksson had.

DR. GUDMUNDUR HANNESSON'S INVESTIGATIONS DURING THE WINTER OF 1908-9

In the winter of 1908-9 the phenomena were mostly the same as those of the winter before, except that the light phenomena apparently continued only as nebulous fog-like light. There are reports of direct voices (frequently singing aloud), levitations and movements of objects, musical instruments being played and touches as if by invisible hands. The Society made attempts to make precise measurement of how objects moved and were transported in the air. Other phenomena, such as blows or air movement and direct writing (as if by invisible hands), were also reported to occur.

During this period, Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson asked the Society for permission to attend séances in order to investigate Indridason and his phenomena (Nielsson, 1922b, p. 462; 1924a, p. 235). Two years after his investigations, in 1911, Gudmundur Hannesson was appointed Professor of Medicine at the University of Iceland, and he held that position until his death in 1946. Hannesson was held in the highest regard in Iceland as a scientist. He had conducted medical as well as anthropological research, he founded the Icelandic Scientific Society and he served two periods as President of the University of Iceland. He was also a member of the Reykjavik City Council. He was an Honorary Member of both the Icelandic and Danish Associations of Physicians. The University of Iceland awarded him an honorary doctorate after his retirement. Hannesson had a greater reputation as a scientist in Iceland than any of his contemporaries and he was known for his integrity and impartiality.

Dr. Hannesson's request was accepted and he chose as his assistant an ophthalmic surgeon, Bjorn Olafsson (Nielsson, 1922a, pp. 27-28). Hannesson and Olafsson knew Nielsson personally but they had not participated in any of Indridason's séances. Hannesson seems to have been known for his disbelief and his scepticism about the reports of the phenomena (Nielsson, 1922b, p. 462; 1924a, p. 235). Hannesson's report was published as a serial in an Icelandic newspaper/weekly (Hannesson, 1910-1911) and much later it appeared in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* (Hannesson, 1924). The report has been reprinted twice in Icelandic periodicals (Hannesson, 1951; 1973).

Hannesson's First Séance

Hannesson attended his first séance to get acquainted with the setting and the phenomena. On this occasion no experimental controls were employed by him (Hannesson, 1951, pp. 27-31). The séance was held in the evening. When the large hall of the Experimental House (having



Gudmundur Hannesson (1866-1946), Professor of Medicine at the University of Iceland from 1911 to 1946. He conducted a thorough investigation of Indridason's mediumship in 1908-9.

about 100 seats) had been filled, the door was locked. Closed shutters already covered the large windows of the hall. Indridason and his watchman seated themselves on two chairs in an empty area in front of the sitters, who sat in rows on benches. As already explained, the watchman was to hold Indridason during the sitting (for further details, see the section, "A Séance in the Experimental House", on pp.62-64). The following phenomena were alleged to have occurred:—

1. Indridason fell into a trance and spoke with a totally different voice: "Good evening. How are you?" Greetings were also heard from many different directions in the empty space around Indridason and his watchman, most of them close to Indridason, but some quite far away. Other voices were heard in the corners of the hall or close to the ceiling. All voices had different characteristics and each spoke in its own way.

2. A trumpet was apparently moved off a table, because through it a voice spoke close to Hannesson's ear and then the voice was again heard high above the floor at different places in the hall. Often sitters called to the watchman and asked about the medium while this was going on, but he always reported that Indridason was sitting quite still in his chair and that he was firmly holding both Indridason's hands.

3. A musical box was moved. It spiralled at high speed up in the air and played a melody. It sounded as if it was circulating close to the twelve-foot-high ceiling and "possibly striking against it" (Hannesson, 1924b, p.245). However, the ceiling was so high that nobody could have reached it. Furthermore, the musical box was heavy and there was complete silence in the hall while it was moving. No footsteps were heard on the wooden floor which could indicate a man walking about with it. At the same moment somebody asked about Indridason, and the watchman said he was sitting motionless but shivering and he was holding both of Indridason's arms. Then the musical box landed with a thump on the table again. The big trumpet was pulled along the floor on the iron stand, and tumbled over. The tin funnel was then moved about on the floor in a noisy manner.

4. The table on which the musical box stood moved and rocked to and fro along the floor until finally it was turned upside down. One of the benches with sitters on it was pulled and dragged along the floor. All loose objects in the room seemed to be more or less in motion.

5. Voices were heard, and knocks were audible on the walls. The knocks responded to sitters' questions. If someone asked for a big blow to be given on the ceiling or some other place not easy to reach, it was at once heard coming from the location indicated. Sitters also spoke to the direct voices, which instantly replied. Hannesson (1924b, pp.245-246) commented on these conversations:—

Further, there are the voices speaking, many of which cannot be distinguished from those of living people. They reply unreservedly when

spoken to; sometimes humorously, sometimes solemnly, just according to the individual inclination of each one. We may happen to converse with a humorist making fun of everything; or a deceased clergyman may raise his voice and say a pathetic prayer. It is, however, quite common that the voices of those appearing for the first time are hardly intelligible but gradually become plainer as time goes on.

These "dead" people are questioned about anything between heaven and earth, but little benefit is derived from their answers, and it is not unusual that they commit themselves to actual misstatements about things known to persons who are present. They seldom have a clear recollection of their life here. Their answers vary greatly, but most of them are unlike what one would expect from the spirits of eminent personages.

6. At the end of the two-or-three-hour-long séance, Indridason's control woke him up by shouting with a direct voice quite close to his ear, "Wake up!" But Indridason tended to fall back to sleep. After three such calls he regained consciousness. Hannesson described this as follows (*ibid.*, p.246):—

The voice shouts once more and the medium jumps up in consternation. He is somewhat confused and asks if the members are present. When a light is lit he again starts and turns his face away from it. Apparently he is not fully awake yet; he staggers out of the hall hardly able to keep on his feet.

Experimental Controls at Hannesson's Second Sitting

As described earlier, the Experimental House had been built according to the Society's specifications (see Figure 1, on p.60). Hannesson convinced himself that there was neither a cellar below the floor nor space above the ceiling, the roof being flat. It would be easy to discover any meddling with the wooden floor, as it was covered with linoleum, which would "soon betray any interference" (Hannesson, 1924b, p.248). Hannesson divided the hall into two parts by firmly nailing down a net from the ceiling down to the floor and out to the walls on both sides. Thus the sitters' benches were separated by the net from where the medium and the watchman should sit. (This area was about one-third of the hall.) Hannesson describes the net as follows (*ibid.*, p.248):—

It is made of strong yarn and the meshes are so small that it is quite impossible to get a hand through them. It is fastened on all sides with laths [strips of wood], which are threaded through the meshes and screwed firmly to the walls, the ceiling and the floor.

Shortly before the next séance began, Hannesson checked that the laths were securely fastened and the knots of the meshes were firm and did not slide. In the middle of the net, down by the floor, a slit provided an entrance to the inside (we are not told the size of the slit). Hannesson continues (*ibid.*, pp.248-249):—

We [Hannesson and his assistant] examine the floor [inside the net]. It is covered with linoleum, which is apparently sound, with closely joined edges. Then the walls. They are ordinary unpainted panels. No suspicious joinings or movable parts are detected. The panel is nailed down in the ordinary manner. In one corner there is a cupboard in the wall containing a miscellany of small things. We examine it, lock the door and seal it. Finally there is the ceiling. It is of panels like the walls and nailed in the usual way. We examine the lectern, the chairs, the table, and the few other things that are in the place: every movable article is carefully searched for secret contrivances, but nothing of a suspicious nature is found. And no hidden cords are to be found.

We now take the table and other movable articles which were so close to the medium that he might have reached them with his hands or feet. These we move eight to ten feet away. There are then left in the centre only the two chairs on which the medium and the watchman are to sit.

In the Icelandic report on this séance, a more detailed description is given, mentioning further precautions, such as: Hannesson examined all crevices in the walls, the floor and elsewhere for hidden threads, and scraped with iron into the crevices when they could not see clearly into them (Hannesson, 1951, p. 35). No strings were found. After Indridason and his watchman were seated behind the net, the slit in the net was carefully threaded together with string, which was tied with a knot and the ends sealed with a seal that Hannesson kept in his pocket.

This second séance which Hannesson attended was similar to the first one, i.e. the same number of people attended—the large hall again became full—and similar phenomena occurred. Nielsson, who acted as watchman, was repeatedly asked about Indridason's position, especially when something was taking place. He always stated that he was holding one or both of Indridason's hands and that Indridason was sitting still. Once or twice a match was lit, and sitters could then see the medium sitting in the same position as the watchman had described.

One incident is of particular interest here. Hannesson reports (1924b, p. 250):—

Suddenly we are startled by hearing the music-box [which was placed in the empty area but out of reach of Indridason] play a tune and circle around in the air at a great speed.

We at once ask the watchman [Prof. Nielsson] what the medium is doing. He says that the medium is sitting motionless in the chair and that he is holding both his hands.

If the watchman were not a man of unquestionable integrity we should have no hesitation in calling him a liar. . . .

It [the music-box] now falls on the table with a great thump. The old familiar voice roars through the trumpet that he has not been at a loss to move the music-box, though it was further away from the medium than usual. He is proud of it and asks us what we think of his performance.

Then began "the same game as at the previous séance: every movable

thing goes mad and tumbles about. It is anything but quieter [i. e. it is even noisier] than it was on the former occasion" (Hannesson, 1924b, p.250).

An examination of the seals, as soon as a lamp was lit at the end of the séance, revealed that they were intact. Hannesson and his assistant went inside to the empty space and carefully examined everything, to see if they could spot something that could possibly give them a clue to the source of the movements, but they found nothing.

Hannesson Imposes Stricter Controls

At the third séance Hannesson imposed stricter controls. Again the hall, and every item in it, was carefully searched from floor to ceiling (Hannesson, 1924b, p.252):—

No effort is now spared in examining everything as minutely as possible. The hall is searched from floor to ceiling, and also every article that is in it. Nothing seems too trivial to be suspected that it may in some way serve the purpose of the impostors.

This is no joke, either. It is a life-and-death struggle for sound reason and one's own conviction against the most execrable form of superstition and idiocy. No, certainly nothing must be allowed to escape.

We undress the medium and examine his clothes. The watchman invites us to examine him. Also the door is locked and sealed and also the cupboard in the wall. The slit in the net is not fastened this time. We are sitting close in front of it, and can watch it.

The Icelandic version provides us with a few additional details, such as: the whole hall was carefully investigated, as well as all the benches, tables, etc. (Hannesson, 1951, p.39). Furthermore, Hannesson reports that the doors of the hall were locked and sealed, thus referring to both doors of the hall: one providing entrance to the materialisation room and the other leading to the lobby. Only five persons were allowed to attend this séance. Indridason and his watchman sat inside the net on two chairs, but Hannesson and his assistant sat outside, with Kvaran seated between them. Neither singing nor music was allowed, so that possible footsteps, opening of shutters and other movements could be heard more easily.

The following occurred (Hannesson, 1951, pp.40-45):—

1. Indridason's control personality remarked that this might be an unusually noisy sitting, since some new and uninvited "visitors" ("spirits") had arrived. Direct voices were then heard swearing.

2. Objects were thrown to and fro with great force. The two researchers lit a match and saw the watchman, Prof. Nielsson, and Indridason in the same position as the watchman had reported when things were thrown. They were sitting, and Nielsson was holding both Indridason's hands.

3. The chair was roughly snatched from under Indridason and thrown into a corner: it sounded as if it had broken. Nielsson got up to support Indridason, who appeared to be very weak. Nielsson's chair was immediately thrown away.

4. Hannesson reports (1924b, p.253):—

The watchman asks for the chairs to be brought back to him, so that he need not leave hold of the medium. I offer to go in and fetch the chairs, and a match is lit while I slip through the [slit in the] net. I can see the two men standing in the centre, and every article inside the net. The chair is lying out in a corner. I make for it, and in spite of the dark I find it at once. The very moment that I turn round to take the chair *I am struck a heavy blow in the back* [Hannesson's emphasis], as it were with a closed fist. Yet a few seconds previously there was nothing to be seen in that corner. I forthwith take the chair to the men and find them standing exactly as before.

When asked, the watchman said that they had stood there all the time without moving. Then Hannesson fetched the other chair and left the empty space via the net.

5. Hannesson continues (*ibid.*, p.253):—

Some moments later the watchman shouts, saying that things are getting serious, for the medium is now drawn up into the air with his feet turned towards the ceiling and his head downwards; and that he is pulling at both his (the medium's) shoulders. We hear a good deal of struggling going on, the combatants shifting backwards and forwards about the floor. The watchman says that the medium is pulled with such force that he is put to the limit of his strength to keep hold of him.

After a while the pull is slackened, the medium sinks slowly down and the watchman manages to put him on the chair.

Then what seemed to be direct voices of the "uninvited visitors" said that they were going away to get more power.

6. When the uninvited visitors "returned", Indridason's and the watchman's chairs were repeatedly snatched away and finally broken to pieces. Hannesson continues (*ibid.*, p.254):—

Suddenly the commotion starts afresh and the voices speak again. The chairs under the medium and the watchman are time after time snatched away and finally broken to pieces. The medium is pulled up into the air with so much force that the watchman, as he says, is repeatedly almost lifted off the ground. All this is accompanied by so much scuffling and struggling that apparently it is going to be unavoidable to go to the aid of the watchman, who is exerting himself not to let the medium go—up into the air!

The scuffle is now carried towards the lectern. Suddenly the watchman shouts that things have taken a dangerous turn, for the medium's legs have been quickly pulled down into the lectern while the small of his back is resting on the edge. He fears that the medium will not be able to stand this and that it will result in disaster, for while he is pulling at his shoulders with all his strength "the others" are pulling at his legs.

We are about to go inside to give assistance, when we hear some still rougher shuffling and the watchman says that everything is again all right. He has, he explains, put one foot against the lectern and in that way been able to pull the medium out and get him on the floor.

The tumult now ceases.

Direct voices were frequently heard speaking, using rude language and threatening the medium. At this point (according to the voices), the "uninvited visitors" went away again to fetch more power. The watchman said he had clasped his arms around Indridason's waist and pinioned his arms down. Additionally, he said, he was squeezing both Indridason's knees tightly between his own. Hannesson lit a match and saw them on the lectern step, in the position described.

7. The uninvited visitors "returned" and the pulpit was pulled once or twice so that it sounded as if everything was breaking.

8. A terrific crash was heard and a heavy thump. The watchman and Indridason had been thrown up in the air and fallen on the floor. The whole lectern had been torn loose. It had been built at the same time as the house and firmly nailed to the end wall. The upper part of the step (to the lectern) was equally firmly nailed to the lectern, but not quite so securely fastened to the floor. Nielsson (1922b, p. 463), the watchman, reported on this instance:—

After a terrible struggle with two vulgar entities, while I kept my arms round the shoulders of the medium, pressing his legs between my knees, a pulpit situated near the wall inside the net and solidly fastened by nails to the floor had its panels all of a sudden jerked upwards from the floor and flung outwards to the net. It will be observed that this involved wrenching the woodwork out of the floor as well as from the wall, the pulpit being firmly fixed to both. After this I myself while continuing to hold the medium was thrown with him up into the air, so that we crashed to the floor violently, I with the result of swollen hands, he with a little perceptible sore caused by a nail upon which he fell.

9. Hannesson found something bulging through the net near the bottom, and noticed it was the corner of the lectern. He grasped hold of it with his hands and challenged the "spook" to pull it away. "Eat hell," replied a voice, and the lectern was dragged, with considerable force, a little along the floor.

10. Hannesson reports (1924 b, p. 255):—

I cannot refrain from retorting in some uncomplimentary term. By way of reply I get some broken glass, and other rubbish that was lying on the floor, thrown into my face. This was thrown from the empty quarter and from a *different direction* [Hannesson's emphasis] entirely to that of the medium and the watchman, who were lying on the floor close to my feet.

Who in the world was it that threw these things?

11. The watchman, lying on the floor, took hold of one of the table legs with one hand and held the other tightly around Indridason. The

table suddenly levitated, and the leg was wrenched out of the watchman's hand. The table crashed noisily upside down on the floor close by them. After that the disturbances stopped.

When the lights had been turned on, the sitters saw the wreckage of the lectern lying broken on the floor, and an unpainted panel where it had previously stood. Pieces of broken chairs, glass from a water-bottle, which had been on a shelf above the lectern, and other items were strewn over the floor. Hannesson reports (*ibid.*, p.256):—

We suggest that everything be photographed in its present condition and so leave everything untouched. But we take the opportunity of examining the lectern and the floor underneath it, for these seemed the likeliest place for concealment of secret devices. Unfortunately we gain nothing by this, except the certainty that nothing was, nor could have been, hidden there. We also examine the nailing, which seems to have been quite secure. . . .

. . . We rehearse the phenomena in every detail, and recognise that there is no possibility of explaining the lifting of the medium by supposed cords from the ceiling.

On the one hand, the primary weakness of this report can be said to be the darkness and that Hannesson did not actually witness the levitations himself. But on the other hand, Nielsson had an impeccable reputation as a professor at the University of Iceland at the time, as well as being a highly respectable minister of the church. Nielsson was, and still is, considered to be one of the greatest theologians and preachers that Iceland has had. It seems extremely unlikely that he was reporting something other than what he thought he was witnessing. Hannesson even ends his report on Indridason's phenomena by stating (*ibid.*, p.272):—

But finally I want to mention that in spite of all observations I never discovered any dishonesty on the part of the watchman [Nielsson], who as a rule was in charge of the medium and to whom I have repeatedly referred above. On the contrary, as far as I was able to judge, his observations were very keen and accurate. On a single occasion only I found a slight and excusable misunderstanding due to the darkness of the room. This man has had better opportunities than any other to observe the phenomena. To be constantly deceived he would therefore have had to be more than blind. His verdict of the phenomena is that there can be no doubt whatever of their actuality, and he is a trustworthy man, highly respected by everybody.

Levitation of a human body has sometimes been observed at séances of various celebrated mediums, but reports of such phenomena have often been hotly debated. The levitations of Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918) are among the best-observed cases, and the historic levitations of D. D. Home (1833-1886) have been frequently quoted and referred to in the literature of psychical research. Some of the most astounding cases of levitation of which there are any record, however, are probably

those of St. Joseph of Copertino (1603-1663). His elevations, and flights over some distance, were reported on something approaching a hundred separate occasions under a variety of conditions and in many different surroundings (*see especially* Dingwall, 1947; Thurston, 1952, pp.15-18). Indridason's levitations must be considered an important addition to these reports.

Unpublished Notes by Hannesson

We discovered with Hannesson's descendants handwritten unpublished notes made by him and describing some séances (Hannesson, 1908-9, pp.1-12). The most remarkable of these occurred on 12th December 1908. Present were Indridason, Kvaran, Bjorn Olafsson, Hannesson, Nielsson and Mrs. Karolina Isleifsdottir (Hannesson's wife, who had indicated her disbelief in the happenings). Description of the following phenomena was written down in the darkness, and the draft rewritten next morning. This is evidently a more detailed account of the séance Hannesson described in his article in *Nordurland* (1910-11) and *JASPR* (1924b, pp.258-260), neither of which mention some important experimental precautions he took.

This séance was held in Hannesson's recently-built house, to control for possible fraud by accomplices and equipment that might possibly be hidden in the Experimental House; although, after having examined the hall thoroughly, he reports that he had been convinced that it contained no secret door or contrivances (Hannesson, 1924b, p.258). Indridason had never visited this house, states Hannesson. The room was chosen by Hannesson only thirty minutes before the séance started. Prior to the sitting, Hannesson and his wife, who lived alone in the house, moved every loose object into one corner of the room and made sure that it was out of reach. The curtains were removed and the windows covered with blankets.

When the sitters arrived, Indridason undressed in bright light in the presence of Hannesson and put Hannesson's clothes on. The only clothes he got back after examination were socks, which had been turned inside out, a neckcloth made of silk, and suspenders. Indridason's hair was examined. The watchman, Nielsson, was also examined (although we are not told how). Doors were locked and sealed. "All round" Indridason's body was "sewed strong string", and this was fastened "quite well to the jacket" he was wearing. The jacket was sewed together (the notes do not say where or how). The watchman was to "hold the string" (probably the string which was left over from the string around the medium). If the string was not loosened, and not pulled out further than his knee could stretch, then Indridason could not reach anything except his own and the watchman's chair.

Phosphorescent tape¹ was put on Nielsson's shoulder. To make it easier to follow any movements by the medium, Indridason was seated in a wicker-chair which creaked as soon as he moved. A red "photographic lantern" was lit, other lights being turned off, and the séance began at 8.45 p.m.

The following took place (Hannesson, unpublished notes, 1908-9, pp.1-6):—

. . . Very good silence at beginning of séance. Konrad [Indridason's chief control personality] greeted and was satisfied with the environment. [The personality] Jon ordered that the red light should be turned off (spoke outside of I.) [as a direct voice], but not until after a matchbox was thrown.

Matchbox thrown. At 8.57 a *matchbox thrown* on the table to us. H.N. [Nielsson] thought it had been in his pocket, but did not notice it being removed. After this no light and therefore not possible to see what time it was.

A hand grabbed H. [Nielsson]. According to what he said, [the hand grabbed him] from the right side (medium on the other side). He saw *an arm go past* the window where a little light shone through a slit in the blankets.

H.N.'s nose touched. — H.N.'s nose touched by an arm. Only one of medium's hands held at that moment; the other one was said to be resting motionless on the back of a chair.

— Unclear knocks in the north side of the living room, quite far away from medium.

— Down by the floor a voice says "Shut up" [in Icelandic]. Medium's chair levitates a bit at the same time (H.N.).

— The string [probably the one Nielsson held on to] pulled but controller [Nielsson] says that medium had not moved at all. Shortly afterwards

— H.N. is struck (from the right side?).

— H.N.'s beard is pulled twice; the back of [Nielsson's] hand is pulled once without him noticing the medium do it. A hand or fingers are felt on the middle of the string.

— H.N. understands an unclear sentence [in English] as "keep mouth". The voice outside medium. H.N. is corrected by the same voice [in Icelandic]: "What a damned fool not to say 'keep your tongue' [in English]".

— H.N. felt his right cheek being touched while he held both hands of medium.

— Medium's neckcloth is thrown on the table to us. [It] was around medium's neck.

— A hand is noticed on H.N.'s forehead. One of medium's hands guarded.

¹ Hannesson had obtained from abroad some phosphorescent tape which lit up in the dark. To the best of his knowledge, nobody in Iceland had such tape at the time. The phosphorescent tape was then usually placed on the zither and other objects to observe their movements in the darkness. Sometimes the tape was put on Indridason and the watchman to see if they moved.

– H.N. feels a foot touch his shin below the knee. He thinks he is quite sure of medium at that moment.

– Medium levitates. [Such that] his hips [were] at the same height as H.N.'s shoulders [who was] sitting. The knee [probably Nielsson's] pushed up and hits the bottom of Indr.

– Clear knocks on the north side of the living room further away from medium, approximately over the buffet. Moved horizontally closer and closer.

– A weak female voice says, "I am talking to my brother—Gudmundur my brother—I have very little power." The voice clearly outside medium. A conversation by means of knocks on the north wall attempted, but did not go smoothly. However, [the knocks] answered clearly a few times and the knocks easily heard some distance from medium.

– Same voice says faintly, "Bye" [in Icelandic].

– The ghost-voice that has been interrupting previous sittings says [in Icelandic], "Keep your mouth shut, cow!"

Now the phosphorescent star is no longer seen. As long as it was illuminated it was clear that H.N. was sitting still.

– A piece of bread thrown to me. Unknown from where.

– Whistling close to the ceiling.

– A Norwegian man (the doctor) speaks very clearly outside medium.

– Twice *blown* on H.N. such that it was heard. He asserts that it is not the medium.

Above written according to my notes in the darkness. Much conversation not written down. At this point the medium became restless and was felt to levitate [probably by Nielsson]. The chairs of H. [Nielsson] and medium fall over. After permission [probably from the controls] I (G.H.) move my chair to the other side of the medium, and raise up the [other two] chairs. The medium is then blocked in the corner of the living room between me and H.N.

Neither of them moved away. The medium's chair levitates a few times, but not with so much force that it could not be held down with one hand. The chair felt as if it kind of sprawled or was alive when it was held. The medium was raised up and H.N. thought that he was being pulled up on [by ?] his head. He did not levitate, though, from the floor. I found nothing on the head when I felt around it.

I heard many times amazingly clear speech outside medium, very close to me, mostly swear-words and curses of the disturbing visitors. Most of the time the voices came from the corner behind medium or from the north side of him. 2 x [twice] somebody screamed suddenly and quite loudly about a palm's distance from my head such that I was startled and punched automatically in that direction, but didn't feel my fist come across anything.

– Once [air] was blown very clearly in my face and, according to what I thought, quite far away from medium's head (*ca.* 1 alin) [two feet; 62.7 cm.] and from a different direction. *Meanwhile the medium was talking* (Sigmundur) [a control personality], and I heard the controller [Nielsson] on the other side.

Apart from that nothing in particular happened. Afterwards, when the house and the string around medium were examined, nothing suspicious [was] found. The sewing not disarranged. This written in the morning 13/12 after notes.

Gudm. Hannes.

Damage or a scratch [noticed on the wall] from medium's chair in the corner indicates that the chair has levitated at least 35 cm.

The woman voice mentioned "proof of identity".

The Norwegian doctor was talking about there being a "god *passiv* stemming" [Danish; in English: "good passive atmosphere"].

Once something was said unclearly; it seemed to be in English. H. N. said he thought it was "keep your mouth". At the same instant voice of a disturbing man said, quite far away: "Damned fool not to know that one says, 'keep your tongue'!"

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

In his paper Hannesson (1924b, p.259) reported the incident when he was blown in the face as follows:—

When I had been sitting with the medium a few minutes I was blown in the face with considerable force, the sound being clearly audible all over the room. *At the same time the medium was speaking uninterruptedly* [Hannesson's emphasis]. He could therefore not have done this with his mouth, and I had no suspicion that either he or the watchman had any instruments for blowing. Besides, his face was turned away from me and his hands were held. *The blowing moreover came from the opposite direction to that in which the watchman was sitting* [Hannesson's emphasis]. The rest of those present—the two unbelievers and the President [Kvaran] sitting between them—were a good distance off at the other end of the room. It therefore seemed impossible to account for this blowing.

A moment later one of the invisibles uttered some abusive words close to my face, as it seemed to me. I immediately struck out with my closed fist, intending to give him a sound box on the ear, but as usual there was nothing but the air.

One of Indridason's Last Sitzings in 1909

We have reports of two séances that Hannesson published in *Morgunn* (1924a), both describing well his precise method of observation. We shall briefly describe the séance which took place on 8th June 1909. Shortly before the séance started, Hannesson examined the net to make sure it was secure and undamaged—which it was. The slit was threaded together and Bjorn Kristjansson and Gisli Petursson sealed the ends together. Inside the net, with Indridason, sat both Skafti Brynjolfsson and Prof. Nielsson to guard the medium, but also Petursson and Hannesson, who were both going to take notes of the directions of the movements of a phosphorescent tape, if it moved. Things were arranged as shown in Figure 2. One trumpet was placed inside the pulpit (door X in Figure 2) and also placed there was an open envelope, on which was glued phosphorescent tape. On the large table lay the zither (on which about three inches of phosphorescent tape had been fastened), and one trumpet. On the small table (8 in Figure 2) lay a few sheets of paper and a pencil. Hannesson and Petursson checked to see if anything had

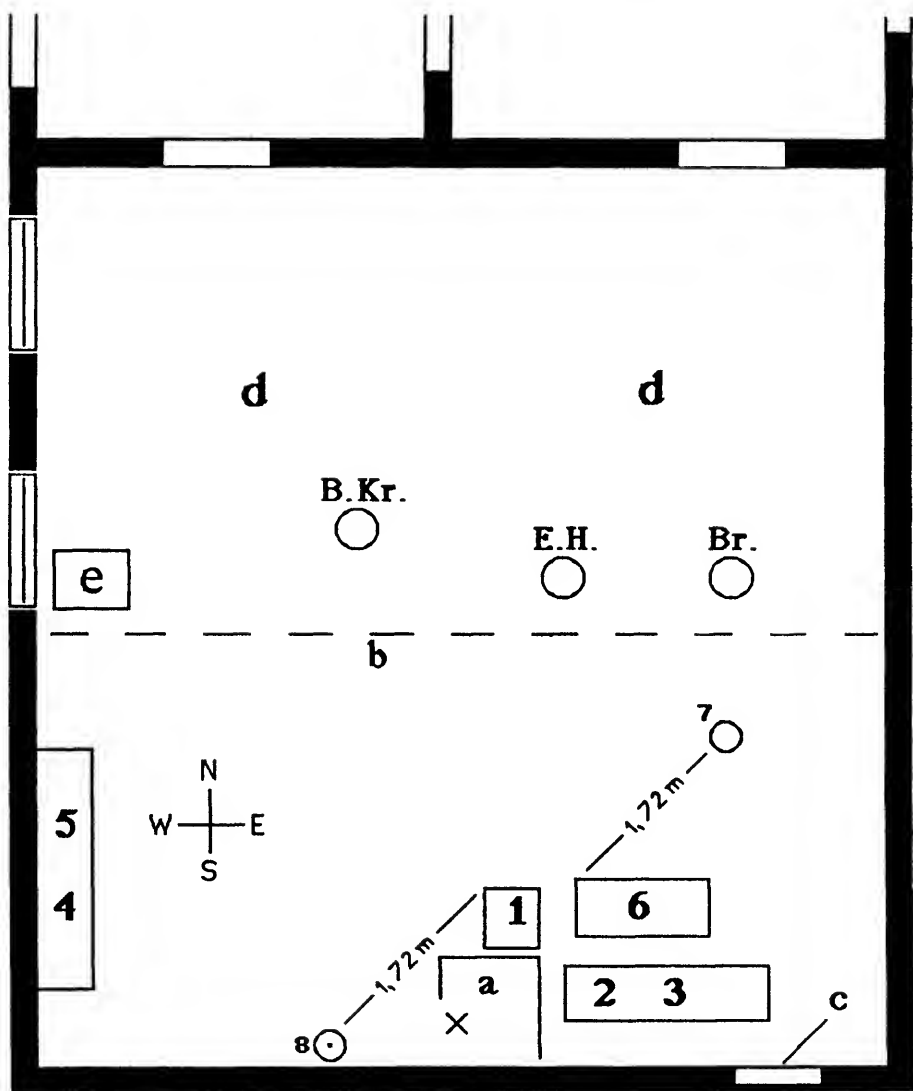


Figure 2. *Location of objects and sitters at Hannesson's séance with Indridason on 8th June 1909 (adapted from Hannesson, 1924a, p. 226).*

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| a the pulpit (immovable, since it had been nailed to the wall) | 1 Indridason's chair | Br. Mrs. Brynjolfsson's seat |
| b the net | 2 Nielsson's chair | E.H. Kvaran's seat |
| c the cupboard (closed, but not locked) | 3 Brynjolfsson's seat | B.Kr. Kristjansson's seat |
| d audience space | 4 Petursson's seat | |
| e harmonium | 5 Hannesson's seat | |
| | 6 the big table | |
| | 7 the large trumpet on a lattice | |
| | 8 the small table, on which writing implements had been placed | |

been written on the sheets and they marked the two top ones by tearing off (and keeping) a corner. The whole space inside the net was searched and examined by Hannesson and Petursson. Nothing suspicious or new was discovered.

The following phenomena occurred (Hannesson, 1924a, pp.218-222):—

1. As sitters were singing at the beginning of the séance, Hannesson heard a female voice accompanying them after Indridason had fallen into trance. The voice seemed to originate from inside the enclosed area.

2. The zither levitated many times. It was seen flying at different speeds in various directions (the phosphorescent tape indicating this). There is no doubt that some of the movements were so far away from Indridason that he could not have reached them.

3a. The strings of the zither were touched and played upon a little a few times, both while it was in the air and when it was on the table.

3b. Once the zither lightly touched Brynjolfsson's forehead. Simultaneously, Nielsson was holding Indridason's right arm. Brynjolfsson thought it impossible for Indridason to have been able to reach that far with his left arm.

4. The phosphorescent tape was apparently taken off the zither and moved around in the air. To the left, the farthest it reached was about six feet from Indridason (Kristjansson sat on the third bench on the right-hand side of the hall, close to the aisle in the middle. He saw the phosphorescent spot come "quite" to his right side, or more). To the right, it did not reach further than ahead of Brynjolfsson, his wife agreeing on this point. Forward, it reached the net and it fell down from about six feet high and was taken up again. Then it went close to the wall about one foot above the pulpit, close over the heads of Brynjolfsson and Nielsson. While these transportations were taking place, one of Indridason's arms was being firmly held by Nielsson, and sometimes both arms were held.

5. Hannesson reports on the phosphorescent tape (1924a, pp.218-219):—

While the phosphorescent tape was being moved close to the net, a dark area was seen ([by] Einar Hjørleifsson, Groa Brynjolfsson) in the middle of the tape, as if it was being held by two fingers. Once it [the phosphorescent tape] stayed in the air, quite close in front of the face of H.N. [Nielsson] and was then either bowed or stretched (U —). H.N. saw two flesh-coloured fingers inside the curve [of the tape]. Simultaneously, he was holding both the medium's hands.* When the tape was being moved it often seemed as if something opaque was covering it and hiding it for a while from one side each time. The tape was finally thrown over to G.P. [Petursson], landing quite close to his feet.

* Sk.Br. [Brynjolfsson] does not know for sure about the medium's hands when the tape was being bowed and stretched in the air. [He]

saw very distinctly a dark spot on it, as if someone was holding round it.

H.N. was definitely holding both the medium's hands, and could feel one of his knees, while the tape was being bowed and stretched in the air. Later the same; one of medium's hands then clapped on H.N.'s hand, such that it was heard all around the room.

H.N. reported that he had seen two pinkish flesh-coloured fingers on the tape inside the curve [of the tape] when the tape was swinging in the air close to him, slightly higher than his eyes. At that moment he was holding both the medium's hands.

Skafti [Brynjolfsson] said he had seen a dark spot on the tape, his wife reporting the same, but did not notice any fingers.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

6. The end of the large table which was further away from Indridason tilted and moved, in small jerks, towards the net and then to the right, close to Hannesson, and in the end it rolled over on its side.

a) Brynjolfsson held firmly onto its end (the one further away from Indridason) but it tilted nonetheless.

b) Indridason was sitting at the other end of the table and Nielsson was holding his right arm.

7. The big trumpet and the iron leg followed the table around from the left-hand side of the hall to the west side and ended on the east side of the table.

8. The little table was turned upside down (this was probably caused by the movements of the large table or the trumpet, thought Hannesson).

9. Shortly before the large table moved, a crack was heard in the pulpit as if something was pulling at it very forcefully.

10. Indridason's chair was thrown across the floor in Petursson's direction.

11. Hannesson reports (*ibid.*, p.220):—

The shelf (nailed down firmly) torn off the pulpit with a loud cracking noise. Thrown on to the floor. *Both* medium's hands were held while this happened (H.N. only or, rather, Sk.Br. and H.N.*).

* *When the shelf of the pulpit was thrown: the medium was held, but not clear whether both [watchmen] were holding or only H.N. Sk. Brynjolfsson asserted that the medium could not have reached the pulpit with his arms. —Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

12. The open envelope suddenly appeared out of the pulpit, went a bit higher up in the air, then moved to the net and swung in an arc west to the wall. Brynjolfsson saw the envelope when it appeared in front of him to the left. It seemed to him that it was by the net. Then it moved up the net and swung in an arc towards the window. The glue was sticky at the end of the séance. Brynjolfsson and Nielsson asserted that Indridason had had no opportunity to go inside the pulpit and remove it.

13. The net began to shake violently close to the harmonium, and this was repeated many times. Indridason was standing between Nielsson's knees and both his hands were being held while this occurred. Hannesson

could feel the harmonium shaking, and it seemed to him that the shaking originated from there. This was repeated many times. Meanwhile only "usual" shivering was felt on Indridason's body and no strong movements (*ibid.*, p.221).

14. Various things from inside the wall cupboard were moved out onto the floor. The medium stated that the things had been apported through solid matter. Brynjolfsson, who sat next to the cupboard, had not noticed the door opening or closing. This door was stiff and it could easily be heard if it was opened. No sitter heard it open or close.

Hannesson wrote this report on the basis of a draft written during the séance and in accordance with the statements of Brynjolfsson, Nielsson and Kristjansson, each of them being interviewed individually the next morning. They had had no chance to confer with each other after the séance. This account was attested by Brynjolfsson and his wife, Groa Brynjolfsson.

Another of Indridason's Last Sitzings

Hannesson attended numerous sittings with Indridason during the winter of 1908-9. The last of Indridason's sittings that we have an account of is a séance on 11th June 1909 which Hannesson reported (Hannesson, 1924a). The preparation was the same as at the sitting of 8th June. Hannesson examined the net and the whole hall in a good light, and all the furniture inside the net, but did not notice anything suspicious. Doors (into the hall and on the wall cupboard) were locked and sealed.

Petursson sat in Brynjolfsson's seat, as the second watchman, and Brynjolfsson sat in Petursson's seat on the bench at the west side of the hall. Kvaran sat on a chair which had been placed upon a large table in front of the net in the middle of the hall, to observe how high the objects (with the phosphorescent tape) might move. Ari Jonsson sat on the front bench, one or two seats from the east wall, to observe how far east the objects moved. Kristjansson sat on the second bench, in the second seat from the aisle in the middle, to see how far west the objects moved. Brynjolfsson was to observe how far south and Hannesson how far north (to the net).

The séance took place in darkness. Let us quote Hannesson on the measurements of the zither movements (Hannesson, 1924a, pp.223-224):—

The zither with the phosphorescent tape moved [Hannesson's emphasis] repeatedly in different directions and by various curved, randomly twisting and direct trajectories in all the different directions of the space. Sometimes slowly, sometimes at an almost tremendous speed. It reached "much" [probably quoting Kvaran] higher than E.H. [Kvaran's] eye-level at 3¼ alin [about 6 ft. 8 ins.], probably close to the ceiling, to the left side of Ari J. [Jonsson] (to the east side,

nearly all the way to the panel); to the right it reached farther than B.Kr. [Kristjansson] (farther west than the pulpit). Once the light-tape [the phosphorescent spot on the zither] got to the left of G.H. (nearly all the way to the net), [and] on a second occasion "a bit" [probably quoting Brynjolfsson] to S.Br. [Brynjolfsson's] right side.

The zither moved, therefore: to the net, all the way to the east wall, [although] not all the way to the bulk-head (1-1½ alin [i.e. 2-3 feet] probably short of it), somewhat farther west than the pulpit and close to the ceiling.

While the zither was moving, *the medium's right hand was being held continuously*, most often by both G.P. [Petursson] and H.N. [Nielsson]. The medium never stood up. *Sometimes both* his hands were held, while the zither was in the air (by *both* G.P. and H.N.).

The zither was played a little bit, both while it was quite high in the air (*ca.* 3 alin) [i.e. *ca.* 6ft.] and also while it was resting on the floor.

That *the zither* moved could be observed, because:—

1. It disappeared off the table.
2. It was played on and the sound was heard to come from where the light-tape was seen.
3. Once it came from G.P. [Petursson's] right side (the side further away from the medium) and touched his mouth, and on a second occasion it touched his arm. —*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Various other phenomena took place during this séance, such as interesting movements of a table (*ibid.*, p.224):—

The large table moved out onto the floor, and then, apparently, onto the pulpit. It was as if the table was bounced harshly on it [the pulpit] more than once.

... *While the table was moving, both the medium's hands were being held by both G.P. and H.N.* [Petursson and Nielsson]. *Furthermore, G.P. kept both his* [Indridason's] *knees between his own knees, and the medium's head rested on G.P.'s forehead.*

... Once while the table was moving, it was as if somebody pulled at the *pulpit* with quite a force, and *it was shaken* so much that it cracked. —*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Towards the end of this séance, while some knocks were going on, Hannesson sent one of his assistants outside the Experimental House to see if there was anybody outside the house producing them. Nobody was seen. The seal of the net was intact after the séance. Hannesson wrote this report with the help of a draft written down during the séance while the phenomena were occurring, and also slightly from memory, on 12th and 13th June 1909. It was attested and signed by Mr. and Mrs. Brynjolfsson.

Hannesson's Observations

Hannesson made a particular effort to investigate the unaccountable movements of objects that were frequently observed. Since there was none available anywhere in Iceland, he ordered from abroad some phosphorescent tape which lit up well in the dark. He placed the tape on a zither, among other objects, to be able to observe how it moved (Hannesson, 1924b, p. 262):—

It was a shock to me to see the zither start. The movement was entirely different from what I had anticipated, and most resembled the play of children throwing a ray of the sun about a room with a mirror. The phosphorescent spot shifted from one corner of the room to another with lightning speed, but in between remained almost stationary; now floating with varied speed in different directions, sometimes in straight lines, sometimes curved lines, sometimes spiral lines; now flashing again in all directions in lines several yards long, as far as one could judge in the dark. This was repeated several times over a period of a few minutes. Finally the zither fell on the table again, and the phosphorescent spot was seen in the same place as before.

Hannesson was acquainted with various tricks used by conjurors for imitating the phenomena. He took the following precautions:—

1. Hannesson ensured that neither Indridason nor the watchman was sitting close enough to the objects to be able to move them (*ibid.*, p. 261):—

One had simply to make sure that neither the medium nor the watchman, nor an accomplice inside or outside the house, should be able to move the things. The first condition I tried to obtain by sitting with the medium and the watchman, and the last by examining the room and preventing the access of others.

At least twenty times when Hannesson sat alone with the watchman and Indridason inside the net during séances, he himself managed to ensure that they could not have caused the movements of the objects, by keeping a close guard over them (holding their hands and legs) while various things were in movement. On this point Hannesson concluded (*ibid.*, p. 261):—

Over and over again I made sure that *neither of them* [Hannesson's emphasis] was moving the things, either directly or indirectly. On this point I have no doubt whatever.

2. Hannesson examined the hall, Indridason and the watchman. He stated that there was hardly any possibility for anyone to move the objects, either outdoors or indoors, in the way that they had been observed to move (*ibid.*, p. 261):—

Often I could see no conceivable possibility that anybody, inside or outside the house, was moving the things. . . . The movements were often of such a nature that doing them fraudulently would have been exceedingly difficult, e.g. taking a zither, swinging it in the air at an enormous speed and at the same time playing a tune on it. This was,

however, frequently done while I was holding the hands of both the medium and the watchman, and there seemed no way for anybody to get inside the net.

3. Sometimes such strength was needed to perform the movements that nothing could explain them except possibly that "an able-bodied man" had been able to move freely inside the enclosed area (Hannesson, 1924b, p. 261). Two features made this improbable:—

- a) No entrance seemed open into the empty space, and
- b) Often light was produced at such short notice that an accomplice would have had no opportunity to get away.

Once a light was suddenly lit (we are not told how) while disturbances were going on and Hannesson thought he saw the trumpet move forward two or three inches. After this meeting, a woman who had sat closer to the trumpet asserted that in the light she had clearly seen it move. This was the only occasion on which Hannesson saw a trumpet move in full light.

4. After continual observation, Hannesson (1924b, p. 261) stated:—

After prolonged observation I saw no way round the inference that the things move often, if not always, in an altogether unaccountable manner, without anybody's either directly or indirectly causing their movements by ordinary means. But although I cannot get away from this conclusion, I am utterly unable to bring myself to believe in it altogether. It is not easy for unbelieving people to accept the theory that inanimate things move about without any natural causes.

The zither went much further away than one could possibly reach with a hand or a foot, reported Hannesson (*ibid.*, p. 262), and much faster than it was possible to run with it around the floor. Also, the trajectories were too complicated, varying and irregular to be imitated by some swing or string mechanism. Besides, no string or pole was ever found in the area that could have been used for such purpose. Hannesson writes (*ibid.*, pp. 262-263):—

Then it occurred to me that possibly this might have been done by fastening the zither to the end of a strong pole and then swinging it. The pole would, however, have had to be both long and strong, and the zither firmly tied to it.

I was unable to see how such a pole could have been available. Where could it have come from all of a sudden, and what might have become of it?

There was still another piece of evidence against this: while the instrument was shifting about, its strings were played upon several times.

5a. What if a reflection like that of the phosphorescent spot had been projected into the room with a mirror? Hannesson tried this in darkness, but the light from the phosphorescent spot was much too faint.

5b. What if the phosphorescent reflection was perhaps produced by some other flash mechanism by the medium himself? Hannesson felt certain that nobody in Reykjavik had this particular phosphorescent

colour, and he reports (1924b, p. 263): "I have since ascertained many times over that I was right in assuming it was the zither with my phosphorescent tape which was actually flashing about the room."

6. Hannesson considered two further explanations:—

- a) Indridason did not sit still, but stood up and held the instrument.
- b) And in that way it was closer to the eye than he had realised.

Hannesson excluded the former explanation (a) by sitting often with Indridason and the watchman inside the net, and keeping close guard over them and feeling the hands of both of them while the zither was flying in the air. He examined the latter explanation (b) by making a contemporaneous comparison of the various directions involved. These observations showed that the zither moved at least eight to ten feet away from Indridason. Additionally, the watchman held Indridason's hands and asserted that Indridason had not moved. This goes against the explanation that the zither had been closer to the eye than it seemed to be and that its movements had really been much less. Hannesson thus assumed (*ibid.*, p. 263):—

My experiments with phosphorescent colour thus led to the same conclusion as my former observations in the dark: *the things actually moved by some incomprehensible means* [Hannesson's emphasis], and even in such a manner that often I could not see how anybody should have been able to produce such movements, however willing to do so.

One main question arose (Hannesson, 1951, pp. 151-153): why had no one produced a light during the greatest movements? Hannesson was allowed by the Society to carry out investigations of the phenomena on the condition that the Society must approve his procedures. The Society followed orders from Indridason's controls in not having light during séances. Hannesson once unintentionally switched on an electric torch without asking for permission. He heard one of the "ghosts" shout, close under his nose: "You damned scoundrel!" (Hannesson, 1924b, p. 265; 1951, p. 153). At the same time the torch flashed and lit up the whole inner area. Hannesson saw Indridason hanging limp in his chair in the same position as the watchman had stated, and everybody sitting still in their own seats.

Often a light was turned on with such very short notice that it would have been nearly impossible for an accomplice who had been inside the empty space to escape in so short a time, which was a matter of just a few seconds. A sitter asked, "May we have a light?" and the control instantly replied, "Yes". At the same moment an electric lamp or a match was lit. Hannesson (1924b, p. 265) commented: "This especially provoked the control when he might have seen in the dark another way to escape, but I was on the whole more suspicious of such an assistant than of the medium himself." Our references, however, do not mention whether a request for light was ever refused.

Hannesson (1951, pp.154-156) suspected at the beginning of his investigations that Indridason was a ventriloquist. Frequently he heard the voices sing, sometimes briefly and faintly, sometimes loudly and whole melodies. He thought the problem was that often two voices were separated by such a short interval that it was difficult to say whether or not the second one overlapped with the first. Hannesson (1924a, p.223) reported one such incident that occurred at the beginning of a séance:—

While the playing went on, in order to allow the medium to fall into deeper sleep, a clear female voice started singing inside the net. But then a clear male voice took over. For a moment, both S.Br. and G.H. [Brynjolfsson and Hannesson] thought they heard these voices *sing simultaneously*. They [the voices] were both heard *very close to me* [Hannesson]. —*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Both Hannesson and Brynjolfsson were inside the net with Nielsson and Indridason when this occurred.

At least twice it happened that Hannesson heard two voices sing, as clearly and distinctly as one could wish, the same song at the same time. There was no possibility for doubt, according to Hannesson (1924b, p.267), since this observation was too distinct. One voice was a high, sharp, female voice, but the other the deep, quavering, bass voice of a man. They both came from the enclosed space, which was empty except for Indridason (and presumably the watchman), and there appeared to be at least eight to ten feet between the locations of the voices.

It seems unlikely that two of the sitters could have been capable of highly professional ventriloquism. The voices also demonstrated high singing skill, practice and artistic bravura (Hannesson, 1951, p. 155), but Hannesson adds, "I am no authority on the subject of music, so I shall judge as little as possible this singing at séances" (Hannesson, 1924b, p.267). Indridason had never learned to sing although he sang in the Reykjavik Cathedral choir. A friend of Hannesson reported to him the following incident (Hannesson, 1924b, p.267):—

A friend of mine was once invited to a séance of the Society, previous to my going there. He was a good singer, but a humorist and jester. Before he went, he told me where he was going, and that he had a trick up his sleeve for the ghosts. He seemed to look upon the manifestations as rather a joking matter. When he came back he was amazed at the ghosts and their performances, and said that this was not altogether natural. "I had heard," he said, "that Mr. N.N. [probably a deceased person] was appearing there and singing, and I knew that he used to be an excellent duet singer. I thought I should soon find out if there was here the question of a trained singer or not, but for a further certainty I was going to offer to sing with him a duet. He appeared, and I did as I had intended. He agreed and consented to my taking the lower voice while he was to take the higher. I purposely began too high so as to make him break, but I failed miserably in my reckonings. He sang the higher voice with such power that the whole house resounded and I was absolutely amazed." My friend thought it very improbable that

there was in the whole town a singer who could do what this "voice" had done.

Final Remarks on Hannesson

Many interesting phenomena are described in Hannesson's handwritten notes, such as various apparently different materialised hands being observed, violent loud knocks being heard all over the hall (walls and ceiling) responding to questions, attempts to obtain on "camphor-black" (?) fingerprints from the alleged materialised fingers (although such attempts are not reported to have been successful), apparently materialised hands pulling Hannesson's hands, direct writing, the door to a room where nobody was being locked from the inside, and male and female voices being heard speaking Danish and Norwegian outside the medium. However, those of his notes that we have (only twelve pages) do not usually describe in detail the circumstances of these occurrences, and in many places they are very sketchy.

Hannesson reported, for instance, a sitting on 1st February 1909 (Hannesson, unpublished notes, 1908-9, p. 7):—

I [am] a watchman. H.N. [Nielsson] and I.I. [Indridason] both bending [?] while a music box and other objects transported [around]. The box [music box] was wound up. A song, which was played on the harmonium, was accompanied on the bells [*sic.*] inside the music box. Transportation of the objects could not have been caused by us three.

Ol. Dav. (?) [probably one of Indridason's personalities] spoke very close to me, but unclear from where. [The voice was] heard as if [originating] in a small trumpet, which stood on the table next to me. While I listened close to the trumpet, or over the trumpet, a mumbling was heard once in a while in the trumpet, as if somebody was saying, "Can you hear?" [This was] also heard even though the trumpet was held to the ear, in the air, far away from the table in different directions.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

On 8th February 1909, Hannesson (unpublished notes, 1908-9, p. 9) reported:—

Felicitas [one of the controls] sang beautifully with a natural female voice, not at all as if it was being faked. Sig. [one of the controls] whistled songs skilfully and ["he"] was accompanied by his brothers (many voices). The voices outside [the direct voices] spoke very clearly.

A blow 3 x [three times] very strong all over the bench (2nd bench) and [it] was also felt clearly on the benches behind. . . .

I saw once a very clear *light fog* [Hannesson's emphasis], which covered large part of the south wall. [I saw it] again [but then it was] unclear and smaller. *There is no doubt about this* [probably referring to the "light fog"]. H.N. did not notice it but everybody else did, I think. —*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Hannesson (1951, p. 163) reports that often a strong gusty wind was blowing during séances when the controls said they were trying to make

themselves visible. This happened even in a closed, windowless room, and the wind sometimes covered many metres' space, and blew with such force that papers fluttered in an open notebook which was lying on Hannesson's knees. According to him (*ibid.*, p.163): "No sound was heard with this gusty wind that could explain where it originated from."

During séances of the inner circle the air in the small hall often became very hot. There were no doors or windows open, but on many occasions sitters still felt a cold breeze (Thordarson, 1942, p.111). Once they sensed a very strong smell of seaweed when Indridason was in trance. The controls explained this by saying that the entire crew of a ship had just drowned and were in the hall at that moment. According to Nielsson (1919b, p.350; 1922 a, p.23), wonderful, delicious odours or fragrances often filled the whole hall and poured over the sitters in waves.

Hannesson (1924b, p.260) remarks, after continuous attempts to prevent trickery during the sittings:—

I continued to attend the séances of the Society for a whole winter, and there was hardly one at which I did not try to detect fraud in one way or other. At almost every séance I noticed something which I considered suspicious, sometimes very suspicious, and at the next one I would be specially vigilant on that particular point. But in spite of all, I was never able to ascertain any fraud. On the contrary, the bulk of the phenomena were, as far as I could judge, quite genuine, whatever their cause may have been. A great many things I had no means of investigating, and so can pass no judgment as to whether they were genuine or not.

Nielsson (1924a, p.29) writes that after this winter Hannesson had declared himself convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena. And when Nielsson was leaving for the first International Congress for Psychical Research at Copenhagen in 1921, Hannesson told him: "You may state as my firm conviction, that the phenomena are unquestionable realities" (Nielsson, 1922b, p.464).

ACCOUNTS FROM OTHER OBSERVERS DURING THE WINTER OF 1908-9

From this winter we have an account of an object changing its position from one place to another without being seen moving between them. Indridason and Thorlaksson had just arrived at the Experimental House one evening early in the autumn of 1908 and were standing in the lobby when the voice of the control personality "Sigmundur" called to them, coming apparently from the large hall through closed doors (Thordarson, 1942, pp.63-65). When Indridason and Thorlaksson had entered the Experimental hall, Thorlaksson said, "Sigmundur, can you take the hat off my head and put it on the pulpit where I can see it?" No sooner had Thorlaksson finished the sentence than he saw the hat on the lectern upside down. The hat was not seen being transported across the hall. It had apparently been placed on the pulpit at the same moment that it disappeared off his head. At Thorlaksson's request the hat was moved back on to his head, and this was repeated once more to and fro. Bright moonlight from an almost full moon flooded the hall and there were no clouds (the shutters of the windows must have been open). While this was taking place, Indridason sat motionless by the wall on the south side of the southern window at Thorlaksson's request. Thorlaksson sat by the wall on the east side of the door leading to the lobby. The pulpit was at the southern end of the hall opposite Thorlaksson, with a desk on top of it (see Figure 1 for directions and positions).

Phosphorescent tape was also placed on Indridason to see if he sat still. Nielsson (1922a, p.27) says that during this winter the phosphorescent tape was sometimes put on his own shoulders when he was the watchman as well as on the medium's. One evening when the tape was put on the zither to observe how fast and far it flew inside the net, the tape dropped off the zither and fell on the floor. Nielsson reports (*ibid.*, p.27):—

After a short while the tape flew into the air and both the medical doctor [Hannesson], who sat next to me to keep a guard over the medium, and I could see three fingers, with the natural colour of the skin, hold it in the air and bring it to us.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Many of the objects that moved and levitated around the hall were borrowed from various people—for instance, the zither was owned by Thorlaksson—which minimizes the possibility that Indridason had put some equipment in it when he was alone.

Direct Writing

During this winter direct writing was obtained at a séance when two assistants were present besides Hannesson and Nielsson. Nielsson does not mention whether they guarded the slit in the net or whether it was sealed. He reports (Nielsson, 1919b, p. 350):—

Another time I had three assistants inside the net—two of them doctors and one a prominent Unitarian amongst the Icelanders in America. One of the doctors and I held both the medium's hands and both his knees, and we controlled each other's hands and knees at the same time. The two others observed the phenomena from some little distance. All the movable objects, such as a heavy table, the trumpets, a big musical box, etc., were carried about, some by luminous hands. On this night we also obtained direct writing while the medium was held in the manner described above. All the persons in the room could hear the pencil moving, and the great doubter of the party [Hannesson], who was watching on the side of the medium on which the writing occurred, heard a fine female voice saying: "Though it is dark I can see after all." The paper then came floating down on us where we were sitting bent over the medium.

Nielsson provides us with more details of this particular instance in another paper (Nielsson, 1924b, pp. 462-463), such as "... the sceptical doctor [Hannesson] taking care of the table, upon which he had put some paper and a lead pencil, which was at such a distance from the medium's left side that he would not by any means be able to reach it, even if his hands had been free." Light was turned on and Hannesson read what had been written on the paper. It was a short but friendly letter allegedly written by a discarnate lady in the group of controls. Nielsson is reported to have kept the letter and, according to him, he was going to have it photographed. (This photograph is not known to exist today.)

Thorlaksson describes a case of direct writing which occurred when he visited Indridason in his living quarters in the Experimental House (Thordarson, 1942, pp. 82-85). Only Thorlaksson and Indridason (not in trance) were present. Thorlaksson tore a page from his pocket-book and placed it and a pencil on a table in Indridason's bedroom. There was no light on in the room, but an oil lamp was burning in the adjacent room, where Indridason and Thorlaksson were, with the door open between the rooms. After two minutes they heard "clear sounds as if the pencil had fallen down on the table and as if it had come down with one end first". Thorlaksson went in and saw the pencil not on the paper as he had left it but beside it. He took the paper and the pencil out into the light. On the paper had been written "singa sola mina vina". This text is broken Icelandic and probably means "sing solo my (lady) friend(s)." Thorlaksson repeated this procedure and again direct writing was obtained. They "felt sure" that on the first sheet they had obtained

the handwriting of a personality called "Malibran", a communicator purported to be a French female singer, as Indridason had asked her "in his mind" to write something on the paper. The second sheet was signed "Edward Grieg" (the famous Norwegian composer). Thorlaksson managed to find an example of Grieg's signature: it appeared to be "completely" the same as the one on the paper from his diary. According to Thorlaksson (*ibid.*, p.83), Indridason had sat motionless in a chair in the outer room and never entered the bedroom while this was taking place.

Levitations During the Winter of 1908-9

Powerful levitation of objects was not unusual. During a public séance in the Experimental House, the harmonium started moving away from Thorlaksson, who was playing it (Thordarson, 1942, pp.57-58). He said he had thrust his left foot against the floor but kept his right foot on one pedal of the harmonium and "followed it" in that fashion "jumping" along the floor. As this was happening Thorlaksson simultaneously told the sitters what was going on. Suddenly the harmonium was snatched away from him. Light was immediately turned on and the sitters saw that the harmonium had been moved onto a table on the east side of the hall. The harmonium was quite large and firmly built, its height being about that of a man's hip and its feet standing on small wheels. The levitation was done so skilfully that no sound was heard when it landed on the table. Two men had great trouble in bringing it down off the table and onto the floor and caused a lot of noise.

Kristjan Linnet was sitting close to the end of the harmonium when this happened and he confirmed Thorlaksson's account (Thordarson, 1942, p.48). Linnet estimated the harmonium to weigh around 150 lbs. (75 Kg.). Kvaran (1910, p.49) also describes this phenomenon, stating that the table had been a few metres from Thorlaksson.

Let us look at one apparently powerful levitation of Indridason himself after a séance in January 1909 (probably taking place in darkness). Nielsson (1924b, p.454) reports:—

This time (18th January 1909) I and two others remained alone by the medium at the end of the sitting. Then the operators seemed to have difficulty in waking him. . . . In a kind of semi-trance . . . he said: "Where are you going to take me?" A little later we three heard his voice coming from close to the ceiling and made some remarks about it. Then one of the controls' assistants was heard to say, loud and directly from the ceiling: "Don't be afraid". Next all three of us clearly heard the medium being drawn along the ceiling of the room, the height of the room being twelve feet, and made to knock his fingers on it. After a while he was taken down and we were asked for light. He was then lying prostrate on the table, still being in trance.

According to our sources, levitations of persons other than Indridason occurred rarely. Thorlaksson says he once challenged the personality called "Jon" to take him up during a séance in darkness (Thordarson, 1942, pp.54-56; *see also* Kvaran, 1910, p.49):—

... Once, as so often, I was sitting by the harmonium after I had finished playing. Then I said to Jon from the Westman Islands:

"It is not more than a man's job for you, Jon, to take me up."

Immediately—just as I finished the last word—I felt as if something covered me completely but did not grasp me in any particular part of the body. At the same moment I crashed down on the floor on my hands and feet behind the harmonium. This happened at such lightning speed that I had no time to realise the route. I had no awareness until I fell down on the floor. It was a complete mystery to me whether I was thrown over the harmonium, shoved past it or pushed through it. I was not conscious of anything until I fell down rather heavily on the floor.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

This occurred in the Experimental House during a séance in darkness. The lights were turned on when the sitters heard Thorlaksson fall down on the floor, and they saw him crawling on his hands and feet behind the harmonium.

More on Direct Voices

We have accounts from various sitters reporting direct voices—even two being heard simultaneously—in Indridason's presence. Thorlaksson says that once two personalities sang "together" away from Indridason, "Ak, vad vårt liv är eländigt" ("Oh, how miserable our life is"; a song in Swedish) (Thordarson, 1942, p.87). Thorkell Thorlaksson and Kristjan Linnet were at this séance and remembered this particular song when interviewed by Thordarson. Kvaran (1910, p.48) states that voices had spoken and sung outside of Indridason. The voices even sang the same melody together "at the same time", one being a powerful baritone voice but the other a beautiful female voice. A "French woman" often sang during séances, either through Indridason or as a direct voice (Thordarson, 1942, p.72). She always sang in French, but while singing her "language" was unclear. On the other hand, her "ability to speak was amazingly clear in speaking words" and some French-speaking members of the Society communicated with her in French (*ibid.*, p.72), but no further details are given.

Nielsson (1919b, p.350) reports on the direct voices:—

I have often heard two voices speaking or singing loudly, while I was sitting alone with the medium inside the net . . . holding both his hands and talking with the control.

Sometimes the control spoke through the medium while the voices were singing, but more often he was silent while the singing was going on but started speaking the moment it ceased.

The direct voices very often sang beautifully, especially three of them, writes Nielsson. He continues, "we could sometimes hear two voices singing simultaneously: the soprano voice of a lady and the bass voice of a man" (Nielsson, 1922b, p. 459). Nielsson (1922a, p. 17; 1924a, p. 234) further reports that at a séance one evening 26 different personalities, each with its own personal characteristics, had spoken through or outside Indridason, who was in a very deep trance.

We have an account from Nielsson of direct voices occurring in full light in 1909 (Nielsson, 1925, p. 108):—

It was an afternoon in 1909. I was sitting with the medium on a sofa in my own drawing room. We were deep in conversation about some irrelevant matter when, all of a sudden, we heard the voice of "Jon" coming as if from just below the ceiling. That was the only time I ever heard him speak in full daylight.

Furthermore, one night in 1909 Nielsson slept in Indridason's bedroom to observe him while asleep (Nielsson, 1930, pp. 193-194). Before they went to sleep they chatted a little with two of Indridason's controls and Jon. Indridason was not in a trance during the conversation. They sat in Indridason's room, a light burned in the outer room and the door was open between the rooms. Before they went to sleep Jon promised he would wake them at a certain time next morning. At that precise moment the following morning Nielsson woke up hearing Jon's voice shout, "Aren't you going to wake up?"

Thorlaksson sat at his home with Indridason once in broad daylight (Thordarson, 1942, p. 88). While Thorlaksson was playing a song by Chopin he heard the "French lady" quietly crooning the song with him away from Indridason, who was sitting at the left side of the harmonium. Then he noticed that Indridason had gone into trance. Then Thorlaksson heard voices singing together, both male and female voices, also "under-voices and overvoices". They all sang the same tune as Thorlaksson was playing. He could not hear the words but he heard the voices clearly. This song was like a 'sweet sound' or an echo. Thorlaksson thought he heard the song coming from behind him, especially from the right side where Indridason was not sitting. He felt as if the singing came from far away, yet it seemed quite close to him.

Sigurdur Haralz¹ (personal communication, 1985) still remembers

¹ Sigurdur Haralz (born in 1901) is one of Nielsson's sons. He is one of two persons still living that we have been able to find who met Indridason. Mr. Haralz was only a child at this time, but his memory seemed quite good in spite of his age when the authors interviewed him on 16th January 1985. Sigurdur's younger brother, Jonas Haralz (one of the directors of the National Bank of Iceland), emphasized to us his older brother's excellent memory. The other person, Kristjan Albertsson (born in 1897), did not know Indridason personally as Haralz did, but still remembers clearly Indridason's involvement in public political meetings in Reykjavik.

clearly two occasions when many direct voices were heard around Indridason. Indridason was at a farm in the country. He was paying a visit to his fiancée, Jona Gudnadottir. Haralz was spending the summer at this farm, his father, Nielsson, being the brother of the landlady, Gudny Nielsdottir. Jona Gudnadottir, Indridason's fiancée, was Gudny Nielsdottir's daughter (and therefore Nielsson's niece).² On the first occasion, Indridason was alone in the room where he was to sleep. Haralz described it as follows:—

Indridi was to sleep in the living room. . . . He was alone in there, the only person. We knew he was alone. Then many voices started talking. The people of the farm were in the kitchen when they heard Indridi in the living room. . . . The voices spoke . . . as grown-ups. Direct voices were heard around Indridi in the room where he slept. He was alone in there. This happened probably in the evening before he went to sleep. . . . These voices bid him goodnight. They joked with Indridi and answered each other. We heard the words. The door between us and him was closed.

The second incident occurred in broad daylight, according to Haralz. The morning after his arrival Indridason was standing on the lawn in front of the farmhouse, "probably to get some fresh air" after the night. Two or three people were present besides Haralz: Nielsdottir, Thorsteinn Bjarnason, a worker on the farm, and Gudni Jonsson, the husband of Nielsdottir (although it is not completely clear whether he was present). Suddenly there on the lawn all around Indridason voices started to speak to him. The direct voices bid Indridason good morning and asked how he was. Some of the voices were joking with Indridason, teasing him jokingly but happily, and other voices seemed to be answering each other. Most of the voices spoke immediately after each other, every one with different characteristics. Some voices spoke simultaneously. Haralz did not hear any female voices; most of them were Indridason's "closest controls". Their speaking lasted only a few minutes. No ventriloquist could have produced these voices, says Haralz.

² In Iceland family names are rare. In general people form their surname by attaching the suffix 'son' or 'dottir' (son or daughter in English) to their father's first name. Persons in Iceland are identified (e.g. in the telephone book) primarily by their first names.

DISCUSSION

Having examined the existing literature on Indridason's phenomena, we think it likely that during his very short career as a medium Indridason may have produced most of the phenomena of physical mediumship that are known to have been reported elsewhere.

In this monograph we have mainly confined ourselves to describing Indridason's physical phenomena, since they were the most outstanding. Not all the phenomena were violent and rough. Nielsson (1924 a, p.238) writes, for example:—

It should be remembered by the reader that Professor G. Hannesson has only described one side of these phenomena and the roughest one, and those were the things most convincing to him. But the phenomena had also a different side, an amiable one, and I have never met with such loving kindness as was shown by some of the intelligences of the fixed group. If this all originated from the medium's subconscious, then he was a wonderful man.

There are many accounts of remarkable spontaneous occurrences that we had to leave out of this paper. However, these instances usually lacked detailed descriptions of the circumstances of their occurrence.

Contemporary Criticism

We have now concluded this overview of the development of Indridason's mediumistic phenomena (a summary of the sequence in which the phenomena occurred can be found in Appendix A). It seems reasonable next to examine criticism of Indridason as it appeared in the contemporary popular press in Iceland.

Contemporary sources reveal that in Iceland Indridason became undoubtedly one of the most famous public figures of his time. Fierce controversy raged over him in the Reykjavik newspapers in 1905-1908 and some of them, especially *Logretta*, *Reykjavik* and *Thjodolfur*, seem to have been determined to have him charged with and convicted of fraud. For lack of evidence, however, no case was brought against him. Other publications, e.g. *Fjallkonan* and *Isafold*, took the Society's viewpoint and supported him.

The contemporary criticism in the newspapers can be divided into four main categories:—

1. Jokes, sarcasm and scorn about Indridason and some of the Society's members.

2. Political criticism of Kvaran and Bjorn Jonsson, who were actively engaged in national politics. They were accused of using Indridason as a vote-catcher for their party. However, there is no evidence to be found either that Indridason made any difference whatsoever for the party of

Kvaran and Jonsson or that they ever even tried to use his mediumship in that manner.

3. Theological criticism, mostly from fundamentalist sects, that the phenomena were of evil or diabolical origin.

4. Criticism of healing experiments. Indridason's healing ability was disputed by the newspapers that were against the Society. Other newspapers claimed that he had healed many people, but no detailed accounts were given nor any names of people reportedly healed. We have somewhat detailed accounts of the healing experiments on Jon Jonsson, but the results appear to have been ambiguous. Healing was not a prominent feature of Indridason's mediumship.

Apart from the healing experiments, no contemporary criticism of any substance seems to have been aimed at specific phenomena or particular allegedly psychic occurrences. Some accusations were made regarding personalities that were supposed to have appeared at Indridason's séances who were still alive (*Logretta*, 1908; *Reykjavik*, 1908c). *Logretta* (1908, p.207) wrote, for instance: "A man who came there [to Kvaran and Indridason] from here [*sic*], and who had heard mention of their conversation with the deceased spirit of Thordur, told them there about the story [probably that Thordur was alive]. They reacted as if somebody had poured cold water over them." Kvaran answered these accusations and reported that none of this gossip had been true (Kvaran, 1908, p.278).

The criticism against Indridason was mostly general and unspecific: it came most often from those who did not attend any of his sittings and seems to have been predominantly conjectural. In reading through the contemporary newspapers, we note that those few who did actually attend sittings, and afterwards criticised Indridason's phenomena, complained about the séances taking place in darkness and reported that they had not been able to observe properly what was really going on (*Reykjavik*, 1908a). The contemporary newspaper articles in which accusations were made are, in our opinion, of a rather low quality and have very meagre substance. For instance, Agust H. Bjarnason (later Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Iceland) wrote after attending only one lecture presented by Kvaran on the phenomena (Bjarnason, 1906, p.82):—

What, furthermore, proved the truth to me, that the medium was hysteric and epileptic or at least something in that direction, is what I have been told about his mother: that she is or had been hysteric, especially at the time when she got married. She had then frequently fallen into coma and stayed in that condition for a long period of time.

—*Authors' translation from Icelandic.*

Although the person who wrote this was a prominent academic personality, to the best of our knowledge Indridason was neither hysteric nor epileptic.

We have not found any criticism from a first-hand witness accusing Indridason of fraud that is supported by any evidence in that direction. Kvaran reported that, just because of their fathers' activity in the Experimental Society, his and Nielsson's children had not got any "peace" on the streets of Reykjavik, although later on public opinion turned in their favour (Kvaran, 1934). Sigurdur Haralz (personal communication, 1985) recalls that some people threw stones and snowballs at him solely because of his father's involvement with the Experimental Society.

Kvaran was accused by some of the newspapers of lying when reporting the phenomena and he was accused of being Indridason's accomplice in cheating. *Reykjavik* (1906b, p.43) wrote, for instance:—

Nobody thinks that Mr. E. H. [Kvaran] has lost his wit, so either this activity of his must be caused by credulity of an extreme sort, or he is an accomplice in this sorcery, in which case it is an unmitigated shame to present this to the believing public.

—Authors' translation from Icelandic.

Reykjavik (1908b, p.197) continued:—

Icelanders have now got charlatans, moreover, professional charlatans. These are the ghost-conjurors.

Einar Hjorleifson [Kvaran] brought this sorcery into the country, like so many other things. . . . —Authors' translation from Icelandic.

Finally *Reykjavik* (1908c, pp.205-206) summarised its previous criticism as follows:—

"Rvik" said the charlatans had:—

1. made spirits do surgical experiments on sick people;
2. made deceased skalds [ancient Scandinavian poets] write poems and novels;
3. organised a congregation in Reykjavik;
4. built a "temple"; and that:—
5. their congregational fee was higher than in the Christian congregation;
6. Einar and Indridi had gone around the country to demonstrate their sorcery;
7. they had taken fees for the shows;
8. they had refused Stefan Stefansson, school director, admission to the shows;
9. they had everywhere refused to use light;
10. Indridi had once been seen to kick a chair that a spirit was supposed to have transported;
11. Bjorn Jonsson had on that occasion been hurt on his head; and
12. the conjurors had said that a man was dead when he was alive.

"Rvik" related these 12 facts and added that *Einar Hjorleifson* and *Indridi Indridason* had deceived people at these shows.

. . . "Rvik" will not stop until the imposture of *Einar and Indridi* has been demonstrated. They both say that their sorcery is supernatural, but they must both know that this is untrue, and receive nevertheless money from people for that.

But this is imposture.

—Authors' translation from Icelandic.

The only item in the above criticism that is relevant to the question of the paranormality of the physical phenomena is that Indridason had on one occasion allegedly been seen to kick a chair that was supposed to have been moved by "spirits". Unfortunately no details are given, so this criticism cannot be properly assessed. Kvaran (1908, p. 278) replied that the accusation was untrue and said that there was no ground for this gossip. Bjorn Jonsson also added, at the end of the same article, that he had got the wound on his head when a chair on which he was sitting at his home had broken, such that he fell and hit his head on the window frame.

No evidence was presented to accompany the accusation that Kvaran was Indridason's accomplice in producing the phenomena by fraud. A relevant point is that Indridason's phenomena were also reported to have occurred on many occasions when Kvaran was absent. The reason why Kvaran was singled out as an "impostor" may perhaps be that he was the first one to publish the Experimental Society's results with Indridason, and he kept on doing so in some of the Icelandic newspapers for as long as Indridason acted as a medium. Furthermore, Kvaran, who was also involved in the country's politics, had political ideas that were opposed to those presented by the newspapers which were attacking him. We know of no sources that accused Haraldur Nielsson or Gudmundur Hannesson of being Indridason's accomplices.

Concluding Remarks

For a modern assessment of Indridason's mediumship it is tragic that the Minute Books of the Society were lost sometime after 1942. They apparently gave fairly detailed descriptions of actual incidents and the controls imposed to prevent fraud. They were written up as the phenomena were happening or immediately after each séance. Most of the contemporary reports leave many questions unanswered, as they often lack sufficiently detailed descriptions of circumstances that may be crucial for a thorough and fully satisfactory assessment of the genuineness of the phenomena. However, on the basis of the several contemporary reports that do exist, we can point out the following arguments that support the hypothesis that the phenomena are likely to have been genuine:—

1. In his well controlled séances in the winter of 1908-1909, Hannesson did not succeed in finding any evidence of fraud, in spite of a thorough and sustained effort to do so. The phenomena were then at their height. Besides, there is no evidence to suggest that Indridason's phenomena were fraudulently produced before that time. (A summary of the methods that Dr. Hannesson used in his investigation is given in Appendix B.)

2. Most of Kvaran's and Nielsson's articles were written on the basis of contemporary notes. Some apparently were written from their memory of events, but usually in both instances they also checked the Minute Books. Thordarson also used the Minute Books to check Thorlaksson's reports. Hence it is not perhaps surprising that our sources correspond in detail, as most of the authors consulted, and based their accounts on, the Minute Books. However, we also have reports of witnesses describing certain events in the same manner, even though it is not mentioned that the Minute Books had been consulted (e.g. the accounts of Gislina Kvaran, Kristjan Linnét and Thorlakur Thorlaksson). Hannesson's reports were independently written.

3. The Experimental Society invited many outsiders to attend séances and witness Indridason's phenomena (Nielsson, 1930, p.198). Among them were strong disbelievers and specially qualified or highly respected citizens, such as the Bishop of Iceland (Hallgrímur Sveinsson), the British Consul (probably Asgeir Sigurdsson), Dr. Guðmundur Hannesson, Björn Ólafsson, and the magistrate who later became a Supreme Court Judge (probably Páll Einarsson), to mention a few. Those who were invited, and accepted the invitation, apparently became convinced that the phenomena were not produced by fraud. Hannesson became convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena, although he apparently never made any statement supporting their spiritualistic interpretation.

4. All that we know indicates that it was the sincere will of the Experimental Society to have the genuineness of the phenomena fully examined. The leaders of the Society were generally considered men of integrity and were among the most educated citizens in Iceland at that time; most of them academics and some holding the highest offices of the country.

5. Many of the macro-psychokinetic phenomena were 'unwelcome', so to speak. For instance, the phenomena occurring in connection with "Jon". According to our reports Indridason seems to have been genuinely frightened by these ostensible telekinetic assaults.

6. Some of Indridason's phenomena occurred in full light and when he was not in trance.

We have chosen only seldom to refer to the voluminous literature on research with other physical mediums. We considered it outside the scope of this monograph to do so. However, in Appendix C, we have provided a comparison between phenomena that are reported to have taken place in the presence of Indridason and those that were observed and reported with Daniel Dunglas Home, the most famous of all physical mediums.

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APPENDIX A

The sequence in which Indridason's phenomena occurred and thus usually the order in which the Experimental Society 'experimented' with them.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Phenomena Reported in Contemporary Sources</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Beginning of 1905 until the spring of 1905	(Apparent table-tilting movements in a group setting) Automatic writing Trance Trance speaking	Some 'proofs of identity' were claimed from the very beginning.
The winter of 1905-6	Levitations of objects (e.g. tables) Knocks on objects and walls Light phenomena (e.g. light-spots and large reddish light-flashes) Clicks or cracking sounds in the air Levitations of Indridason Dematerialisations of Indridason's arm	A short period of materialisations was reported this winter when the light phenomena reached their climax.
From February until the spring of 1906	Various kinds of knocks Odour phenomena Healing experiments 'Proofs of identity' claimed	Indridason became ill in February 1906. Different phenomena were obtained for the rest of this winter.
The winter of 1906-7	Light phenomena Materialisations of human forms Appots	Indridason's materialisation ability weakened very much at the beginning of 1907.
The winter of 1907-8	Levitations of objects Violent movements of objects Flying and throwing of objects as if by invisible power Levitations of Indridason Knocks Invisible playing of musical instruments Invisible winding of a musical box Sitters touched and pulled by apparent materialised limbs Direct voices	In December 1907 violent poltergeist outbreaks took place around Indridason. A few light phenomena were reported this winter.
The winter of 1908-9	The same phenomena as the winter before, but also:— Blows and gusts of wind Singing of direct voices Direct writing Sitters observe apparently materialised limbs	Dr. G. Hannesson made extensive investigations on the genuineness of the phenomena throughout this winter.

APPENDIX B

Summary of major methods which Gudmundur Hannesson used in his investigation.

G.H.: Dr. Gudmundur Hannesson. H.N.: Prof. Haraldur Nielsson.

I.I.: The medium, Indridi Indridason.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Short Description</i>
The empty area of the Experimental House was isolated.	The area where I.I. sat and in which various objects (trumpets, tables, etc.) were placed was isolated from the rest of the hall. G.H. nailed down a net reaching from the ceiling down to the floor, which was made of strong yarn with meshes too small for a hand to get through. The net was fastened on all sides with wooden slats threaded through the meshes. The slats were firmly screwed into the ceiling, walls and floor.
Entrances were locked and sealed.	Doors leading to the séance hall were locked from the inside and sealed. The slit in the net, which provided entrance into the empty area, was also tied together and sealed.
The hall was examined.	The whole hall was carefully searched shortly before and immediately after experimental sittings, and the ceiling, walls and floor, the panel and all crevices carefully examined for possible clues to fraud.
Sittings were held in other houses.	The phenomena occurred at séances in other houses, e.g. at the homes of the bishop and G.H. This supported the opinion that the Experimental House was 'clean'. In his own home, G.H. chose the séance room shortly before the sitting.
Phosphorescent tape was put on most of the objects.	G.H. put phosphorescent tape on the objects that moved in the darkness at séances, to observe their movements. He reported that the movements were odd, and not like the movements that one would expect if I.I. (or an accomplice) had produced them by swinging the objects around with string and/or a pole.
'Multiple effects'.	G.H. tried to notice whether two or more of the phenomena occurred simultaneously, in such a way that a single person could hardly have faked them. He reported several such simultaneous occurrences, e.g. when he felt a strong blow coming from a different direction than that of I.I. and the watchman. On at least two occasions he was sure he heard two different direct voices simultaneously singing the same tune.

Excluding accomplices.

G.H. selected disbelievers to attend some of the sittings to control for a possible deceiver among members of the Society. For the same reason G.H. had sittings where only a few persons he trusted were allowed to attend.

Silence.

G.H. had sittings with only a few selected people and without playing of the harmonium, to be better able to notice if someone moved around the hall. He observed many phenomena occurring during silence.

Sudden unprepared actions.

- (i) Sometimes a sitter asked for a knock somewhere in the hall, and immediately the knock was heard coming from that spot. G.H. reported that the nimbleness of an impostor would have to be amazing.
- (ii) Sitters often turned on a light immediately after asking for permission. Nothing suspicious was seen at these moments.
- (iii) Sometimes lights were suddenly lit without permission.

I.I. searched before sittings.

- (i) I.I.'s clothes and hair were carefully examined.
- (ii) I.I. had to change clothes before at least some of the sittings with G.H. G.H. watched him while he was doing this.
- (iii) I.I.'s clothes were sewn together.

I.I. watched.

- (i) A watchman sat by I.I. during séances holding all his limbs.
- (ii) Sometimes two watchmen held I.I.
- (iii) I.I. was blocked up in one corner of the séance room with two watchmen, one on each side, holding him.
- (iv) A string was sewn around I.I. H.N. held the end of the string. He had the string so short that I.I. could not reach the objects that were expected to move without him noticing.
- (v) G.H. put phosphorescent tape on I.I. to see where he was.
- (vi) I.I. was seated in a wicker chair, to hear if he moved in the chair or out of it.

The watchman searched.

- (i) In our sources we are told that the watchman (H.N.) was often searched before sittings.
- (ii) The watchman was held like I.I. during séances. G.H. held his hands and felt his knees while the phenomena took place.
- (iii) G.H. put phosphorescent tape on the watchman to see where he was.

Ruling out possibilities.

- (i) G.H. used various methods of producing light spots, to see if the lights that moved at séances were for certain the phosphorescent tape on the objects. These light spots never resembled the light spots coming from the phosphorescent tape.

Ruling out possibilities
(continued).

- (ii) The phosphorescent tape was bought abroad. It was not possible to buy it in Iceland at the time.
- (iii) Hannesson argued that nothing could explain many of the phenomena, except that an able-bodied man was free inside the net. Three strong men were not able to shake the pulpit which later at a séance was torn loose by invisible power.

The objects that moved.

G.H. examined the objects that moved during sittings, both before and after séances. He found no hidden cells in them. Some of the objects were not owned by the Society; for example, the zither, which was often moved through the air, was borrowed from Thorlaksson. I.I. did not own any of the objects.

APPENDIX C

Comparison of alleged phenomena observed in the presence of Indridi Indridason and Daniel Dunglas Home. Home's phenomena as reported in Dunraven (1924), Crookes (1972) and Zorab (1970) were examined for the construction of this table.

H: denotes phenomenon occurring in the presence of D. D. Home.

I: denotes phenomenon occurring in the presence of Indridi Indridason.

Type of Phenomenon

- H I Medium falls into trance
H I Trance speaking

Knocks

- H Raps, like stream of electric sparks
H I Clicks/cracking sound in the air
H I Knocks respond to sitters' questions and requests
H I Knocks heard on the medium himself
H I Loud and heavy knocks

Blows

- H I Cold/hot gusts of wind
H I Gusts of wind strong enough to blow paper
I Gusts of wind as if someone is blowing

Odour Phenomena

- H I Sudden fragrance in presence of medium
H I Other smells, e.g. smell of seaweed
H I Odour 'clings' to sitters after touch by medium

Phenomena in Connection with Attempted Healing

- H Strange heat radiates from medium
I Operation without equipment
I Wound heals completely in a few minutes

Movements of Objects

- H I Trembling of objects
H 'Earthquake effect'—séance room trembles as in earthquake
H I Objects move a short distance
H I Light objects move a long distance
H I Heavy objects move a short distance
H I Heavy objects move a long distance
H I Curtains pulled to and fro by request
H I Light is turned off

Levitations of Objects

- H I Tilts
H Objects do not fall off a table that tilts
H I Light object levitates high
H I Heavy object levitates

Objects Moved Through the Air Without Support

- H I Heavy and light objects move a short distance
- H I Light object moves a long distance
- I Heavy object moves a long distance
- I Objects move as if they have been thrown powerfully
- I An object moves between two places without being seen moving

Phenomena in Connection with Musical Instruments

- H I Musical instruments play without anyone touching them
- I Winding of a musical box by itself
- H I Musical instruments played while being moved through the air

Movements and Levitations of People

- H Medium walks in darkness without bumping into furniture
- I Medium is thrown or dragged along floor
- H I Medium levitates
- H I Other than medium levitate during a séance
- H I Medium is 'transported' a long distance

Fixations (the opposite of movement)

- H I Sitters cannot move medium's body or limbs
- H I Sitters cannot move objects or stop them from moving
- H Object becomes light or heavy on request

Light Phenomena

- H I Fire-flashes or fire-balls
- H Small lights, stars or 'phosphoric balls' in the air
- H I Luminous clouds
- I Small and large light-flashes on walls
- I Light-spreads, as large as 10 to 12 feet
- H Luminosity of objects, clothes, letters, etc.
- H Luminosity of medium's head, hands, etc.
- H I Luminosity of materialisations

Materialisations

- H I Only shadow/shape of apparently materialised fingers is seen
- H I Only a hand or foot is seen
- H I Only shadow/shape of human figures is seen
- H I Complete materialised human being is seen
- H I Sitters touch materialised fingers
- I Sitters touch materialised limbs/trunks that do not recede
- I Monster-like 'animal' is seen *

Touches or Pulls by Apparently Materialised Beings

- H I Sitters are touched
- H I Objects are pulled
- H I Sitters' clothes are pulled
- H I Sitters are kissed

* This incident is not mentioned in the text. It was reported by Thorlaksson.

Touches and Pulls by Apparently Materialised Beings (contd.)

- I Objects that have been firmly fastened are torn loose
 I Sitters are violently pulled or punched

The 'Fire Test'

- H Medium handles something burning without hurting himself

Dematerialisation

- I One of the medium's limbs becomes undetectable by touch

Changes in the Size of the Medium

- H Elongation
 H Medium becomes shorter/smaller

Phenomena in Connection with Essence

- H Medium 'withdraws' scent from a flower
 H Liquid is extracted from out of something, e.g. spirit from brandy
 H Liquid is 'moved' out of a glass/put back in a glass
 I Medium produces apparently unknown substance

Sounds Heard Outside the Medium

- H I Laughter
 H I Clatter of hoof-beats
 H I Footsteps
 H Music or ringing of bells
 H I Rustling noise of clothes or as if someone is moving
 H Whistle, whirr of wings, bird chirp/twitter
 I Buzzing sound

Direct Voices (voices that are heard outside the medium)

- H I Whisper
 H I A few words are spoken
 I Voices speak through trumpets that are being moved through the air
 I Voices speak without the help of trumpets
 I Singing of voices
 I Two voices sing simultaneously

Phenomena in Connection with Writing

- I Automatic writing
 H I Medium writes while entranced, allegedly possessed by a discarnate
 H I Direct writing, i.e. writing of a pen without human touch
 H I Signature of a famous person is obtained with direct writing

Apports

- I Transportation of objects through matter
 I Transportation of medium through matter

Phenomena of the 'Mental' Type

- H I Medium has visionary experiences
 I Medium describes event while it is occurring at a far distant location
 H Medium 'reads' another person's mind
 H I Medium describes the past

Phenomena of the 'Mental' Type (contd.)

- H I Medium claims to see deceased people
 I Medium recognises from a photograph a deceased person whom he has not seen before
 H I Medium speaks language which he apparently does not know
 H I Medium provides knowledge from ostensible discarnate person

General

- H I Two or more phenomena take place simultaneously in such a way that this is apparently impossible for one person to do
 H Phenomena often occur in full light
 I Phenomena seldom* occur in full light
 H Small number of sitters allowed to attend sittings
 I Large number of sitters allowed to attend sittings
 H Phenomena seldom occur spontaneously outside sittings
 I Phenomena often occur spontaneously outside sittings

* Many violent phenomena were reported to have taken place in full light in Indridason's presence during poltergeist outbreaks in the winter of 1907-8.

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