

MYSTERIES
OF
THE SEANCE
AND
TRICKS AND TRAPS OF
BOGUS MEDIUMS

A Plea for Honest Mediums and
Clean Work

BY A LIFE-LONG SPIRITUALIST

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INTRODUCTORY.

It is not a pleasant task to write regarding the faults or misdoings of our fellow-mortals, but there are times when it becomes a necessity, in order that the public in general, and our friends and acquaintances in particular, may be protected from the rascality and greed of conscienceless scoundrels. It is a fact well known to the brainiest men and leaders of the movement, that Spiritualism is to-day carrying an immense load of fraud and rascality. They know that a large proportion of so-called mediums who are posing as demonstrators of "spirit return" are dishonest in their work, and use more or less of deception. This is true, not only of "phenomenal" mediums, but also of those whose specialty is the mental phase, or "test" mediumship, as we shall show in these pages.

The writer of this has been a "confirmed" Spiritualist for many years, and has passed through all the various stages of investigation, credulity and skepticism usually experienced by converts to the Spiritualistic philosophy. He has investigated carefully and without prejudice every phase of mediumship presented by professed mediums from Maine to California, and is as firmly convinced as a mortal can be from the evidence of his five senses, supplemented by intuition and a fair supply of common sense, that death (so-called) does not end all, and that the spirit or immortal part of man can, after the change called death, return under certain conditions and communicate with those who are still in the flesh. Also that certain physical phenomena can and do occur at times, but that such manifestations are exceedingly rare, and entirely beyond the control of any medium. To show how the counterfeit presentments of these phenomenal manifestations are produced, in order that Spiritualists may be able to detect and expose them, is one of the objects of this book; and to defend and assist the honest mediums of our

land, and of the whole world, in fact, is another object. There are thousands of these to-day—good, honest, liberal souls, who are gifted with fine psychical powers, and in a great measure depending upon their mediumship for a livelihood, who are dragging out a hand-to-mouth existence, because the bogus medium with his or her sensational tests and clever trickery draws away the test-hunting and phenomena-chasing element and gets the dollars. The local societies, too, favor the bogus one in too many instances. These societies, in their early struggles for existence, were glad enough to get their honest home mediums to give tests for them and help them out, but when the sensational fake came along with his brilliant work, he or she could pull in a crowd and fill the coffers of the society. Thenceforth, except in times of adversity, the societies have no use for the home medium. We can name several societies now paying big salaries to fakes, knowing them to be such. Yet they call themselves "Spiritualists." What a travesty upon the name!

When Spiritualists learn to take care of their true and honest mediums, and kick out of their organization all the fakes and their assistants, then will the cause stand some show for recognition by the world, and the intelligent ones who know its truth will not be ashamed to be classed among its members.

There are many in the Spiritualist ranks who oppose any mention of the fraudulent work of crooked mediums and resist any attempt to expose or do away with them, and all who insist upon honest work only, are denounced as "fraud-hunters." Most of them acknowledge, however, that there is much fraud. As there is no question in the minds of honest, intelligent people regarding the propriety of denouncing fraud in all its guises, no apology is offered for this work. The statements made herein are true and can be verified by any one who will investigate with his eyes open, and use ordinary common sense in so doing. If all Spiritualists would but turn "fraud-hunters" there would soon be no frauds to hunt.

"With malice toward none, and charity for all."

THE AUTHOR.

POINTERS FOR THE "DEAD-EASIES."

**These Lessons, Well Studied by Honest Spiritualists,
Will Work Hardships to the Imitators and
Appreciation for Genuine Mediums.**

**A Lucid Explanation of Many of the Methods Adopted by Fake
Mediums to Deceive the Public—A Thorough Exposition
of the Means, Traps and Tricks of an Organized Gang of
Swindlers That Harass Spiritualism—The "Blue Book."**

TESTS AND MESSAGES.

Mental or "test" mediumship is the most common phase, and the easiest to counterfeit, therefore we find more imposition practiced upon the public in this line than in the physical phenomena, and it is harder to detect it. In fact, it is almost impossible to separate the false from the true.

There are various ways in which the necessary information for "test" work is secured, the most common being the exchange of test material between mediums. In giving sittings mediums gather from their sitters much valuable information, and they exchange this for other data that they can use in their business, either in private sittings or in public meetings.

Again, in every city or town where there are many Spiritualists, there are persons—one or more—who make it their business to gather up items of information regarding those who seem to be interested in Spiritualism. These items they sell to mediums who visit the city. And they also furnish them to the "Mediums' Association," which issues a

list of the same to its members. Most of the faking mediums belong to this association, and get many of their items that way. The information is most complete as a general thing, and enables the medium to give the most startling "clear-cut tests" from the platform or in private. The Boston "Blue Book" contains about 7,000 names. Those who are regarded as very credulous are marked in side notes, "Dead Easy." And there are many so marked. It would be a surprise, and quite an entertainment for some of our Spiritualist friends if they could look over one of these interesting pamphlets. Supplemental lists with late information are occasionally issued. Some professional mediums of the sensational class have an advance agent, who precedes them, gathers up "test" material, and arranges for parties to attend the medium's public meetings and respond to certain sensational tests given from the platform. This is a very effective way of advertising oneself, and always brings abundant returns in the way of private sittings at the rate of \$1 to \$3 per sit. As the agent makes all the arrangements and the stool-pigeon does not meet the medium until he receives the "test," of course he can truthfully answer that he has "never met the medium before," when interrogated. California has several professionals who are artists in this line of work, and there are not a few in the East. The compensation paid these stool-pigeons is usually \$1 to \$5 per evening, but many will help for the fun of it and a free ticket. The confidential agent is also useful as assistant about the medium's "parlors," where he spots the callers and posts his employer regarding them. In case he does not happen to be posted about them himself—if they appear to be "good picking," the medium is "engaged" just then, and an appointment is made for some future day, and in the meantime the agent does a little detective work. When the parties call again for their sitting the medium is "loaded" for them, and they get most "wonderful tests." As soon as the medium gets a good run of business he is able to go it alone, and the agent is sent on to the next city to prepare for his master's coming. In a public meeting a strange medium has no trouble whatever in locating parties for whom he has prepared tests. The assistant is always there early and observes where the intended victims take seats. He then prepares a card or slip of paper, giving the victim's name or number, with number of seat and row. This is

given to the medium. In case the victim changes his or her seat, the medium is not disconcerted, but gives part of the test and waits for the "recognition," which generally comes, if the party has not left the hall.

SEALED LETTER AND BALLOT READING, ETC.

The ability to read sealed letters and closely folded ballots is evidently possessed by some individuals, as has been demonstrated by scientific experiment, under conditions which would not admit of deception. It is clearly a psychometric power, and the claim that it is a demonstration of spirit return, in all cases, or even in any, is open to question. To be able to read a written and folded missive, to give the substance of it without touching it, does not of itself, prove that decarnated spirits are assisting in the work, nor do the character and accuracy of the answers and messages given in response to such written letters or questions, as a rule, indicate any such agency. Yet it is possible, as many believe, that in some cases the departed may thus manifest.

There are many mediums or sensitives who claim to possess this gift or faculty; and a very few of them exhibit it under conditions that are entirely satisfactory to investigating minds. There are different methods used, and some will not bear close scrutiny. For instance one medium, in public work, will insist upon having the table upon which the ballots are placed, so high that the audience cannot see all over the top of it and watch the manipulation of the missives, which must be simply folded—not sealed. In such cases no one is allowed upon the platform with the medium, nor to sit in any position where they can see all that is done. It is thus easy for those who are expert at the business to open and close the folded papers with one hand, and possess themselves of the contents.

Some will allow themselves to be blindfolded, and then read and answer the written questions. There is a trick in this, too, the bandage about the eyes being so arranged that it is easy, with practice, to look downward, through the opening alongside the nose, and see all that is necessary. This trick is successfully worked by a famous eastern medium whose "grand work" is the subject of many laudatory notices in the Spiritualistic press.

Another method recently used by a noted medium was this: He asked the audience to place their sealed letters

upon the table on the rostrum, and left the room during this part of the operation, that he might not see who put them there. Returning, after the usual harangue, he professed to give the contents of one of the letters before touching any upon the table. No one responded to it. He then took a letter from the table, opened it and read from it, apparently, the same words he had just given. Laying aside this mis-sive he gave the contents of another, which was promptly recognized; and, as before, he selected a letter from the table, and read from it the words just given. This process was continued for an hour or more, much to the satisfaction of the faithful and the mystification of the skeptical. It was simply an old and easy trick well worked. The first test was a faked one, and the letter which purported to verify it was in reality the one that he read next. Thus, instead of giving the contents of each letter and then finding the letter itself to verify it, he simply opened and read each letter and then gave the contents. He mystified the audience by giving the fake message first.

To read sealed letters, where you have the time and are not watched, is also a simple matter. The majority of those who send letters to a medium to be read have such faith in him that they simply seal them as usual. A little steam or careful manipulation enables them to be opened, read and re-sealed. Where the writers are extra careful and sew or fasten their letters securely, a little soaking in alcohol or gasoline renders them semi-transparent, when enough of the contents can be read to satisfy the writer that the medium is a "wonder." The alcohol or gasoline soon evaporates and leaves no trace.

In cases where ballots and sealed letters are read by the medium at a private sitting where fraud is used, the method is generally to substitute a dummy. For instance, the operator will have you write names or questions on a slip of paper and fold it small. This he or she places in an envelope and lets you hold it, or presses it to your forehead while standing behind you, and then proceeds to give you the names and pretended messages or answer the questions, as the case may be. In any event, by one of these methods the medium has made a "switch" and read what you have written. Test this some time by giving the wrong name or misspelling it, and you will see the result will verify this statement.

Ballot and sealed letter reading in meetings and circles is done by many different methods. Some use a box or bag with different compartments. One part contains dummy ballots in sufficient number, and the missives from the audience are collected in the other. The assistant who collects them then empties the dummies upon a stand or table, and carries away the bag, which yet contains the genuine ones. These are conveyed to the medium, who opens them and makes notes of the contents. This is generally done in a cabinet behind a screen, or in another room. The medium usually remains out of sight in another room until time for the seance to commence.

Another method, worked without assistants, is to collect the ballots (unsealed in this case), have them placed upon the table or stand on the rostrum. The medium then picks them up, one at a time, opens and reads them secretly, while standing in full view of the audience. This requires practice but is easily done by some mediums and is seldom detected. One medium that we know has a small toy telephone for use in his circles. The wires are very small and not visible in the semi-darkness of the seance-room. This 'phone is connected with another in an adjoining room. The medium's wife collects the ballots, and disappears with them into the next room. The medium does not touch or see the ballots, but, reclining upon a lounge in view of the audience, proceeds to give names and messages, and answer the questions contained in the ballots. His head rests in a natural position upon his hand, in which is concealed the small "watch-case" receiver of the 'phone. The other is in the adjoining room, where the wife has opened the ballots, read them, and talks the contents to the 'phone held by the medium to his ear. Where the medium is permanently located, speaking tubes or phones, cleverly concealed, play an important part in his seances. †

In case the medium is accused of fraud in any of these practices, he promptly conceals all evidence of such helps, provides his next circle with several stool pigeons or confederates, and invites a number of skeptics and prominent Spiritualists, and gives a "remarkable seance," thus demonstrating to the audience that his work is "genuine."

Another method frequently used is for the assistant to pass around in the audience a writing pad with sheets of paper thereon, upon which each is asked to write the name

of some spirit friend. When the sheet is full of names it is removed and handed to some skeptic to hold, while the assistant goes to another room for an envelope in which to seal it securely. When the assistant returns with the envelope another sheet of paper is on the pad ready for more names, and the process is repeated. While the assistant was out (taking the pad along, of course), the medium, who was "resting" in the other room, removed a sheet from underneath a layer of carbon paper on the pad and put in a fresh sheet. On the sheet taken out of course he had a fac simile copy of all that was written upon the outside sheet now being held by the skeptic in the audience. Thus it is easy for him to give a lot of astounding tests when the seance opens. If any in the audience have heard of the trick and demand an inspection of the board or pad, it is an easy task to substitute another that has not been fixed, for examination, and the "poor, persecuted medium" is vindicated right there.

In this connection let us give you a valuable pointer: Whenever you are asked to write your name in a circle, meeting, or private sitting, always insist upon examining carefully the pad or board or table upon which you are to write. Some mediums have a prepared table for this purpose. Examine it secretly if you can, openly if you must, and the probability is you will so disarrange the "conditions" that you will get no "test" at all. In that case refuse to pay, or demand your money back if you have paid in advance. No test at all is, to an honest person, preferable to a fraudulent message, which is in fact no test.

The surest plan of thwarting the swindling intentions of a dishonest medium is to refuse to write anything whatever, for there are many methods by which the medium can gain possession of and read the writing.

While on the subject of ballot tests it might be well to give as an example the method used by a prominent woman medium in California. She will not allow any one on the platform with her, nor in the balcony or any seat overlooking the table used. After the ballots are collected and dumped upon the table (usually a large number) she steps to the table and mixes the ballots, apparently in a careless way. While doing so she takes care to palm one or more. Some skeptic in the audience is then requested to step up and see if the ballots are all properly folded. While he is doing this

she manages to open and read the palmed ones. Then, the platform being cleared, she sees some names or messages "written in the air" perhaps (the ones she has just read in the palmed ballots.) Then she remarks, "We will now try to find that ballot," steps to the table and picks up the ballots one by one until a rap is heard, asking with each: "Is this it?" Of course it is easy while doing this to drop the palmed ballots into the pile. These she keeps watch of, and finally picks up one, when three loud raps are heard. Then the ballots are handed still folded to some one in the audience to read out loud so all can hear. The ballot proves to be the one she saw in the air, and then she is applauded. This medium has a most perfect acting rapping machine attached to her knee and worked by slightly pressing her knees together. She always has raps in plenty at her command and a devoted set of followers, some of whom believe implicitly in her "grand mediumship," and the rest, knowing she is a smooth fraud—one of the smoothest in the land, uphold and defend her for the money they are making out of her work. She is particularly smooth as a talker, having a beautiful flow of language. The well-read Spiritualist, however, will generally recognize in her grandest flights of oratory the faithful reproduction of discourses given in the past by some of our most famous platform speakers, such as Cora Richmond, Moses Hull, Wm. Denton and others.

But to return to the seance. In mixing the ballots on the table she invariably works them into a ridge or windrow at the front and sides of the table. This leaves a hollow spot or depression that is beyond the range of vision of any one in the audience. In this hollow she dextrously opens with one hand the ballots she wishes to read, taking in the contents, and refolds them in the same way, all the time talking with her mouth and gesticulating with the other hand. In this she is practice perfect. In re-folding the ballots after reading them she generally turns down a corner, or marks them in some way so she can distinguish them easily. Now comes the grand test of all. One or two skeptics are called for to come on the platform and help find the ballot whose contents she has just given. They come and pick up the ballots one by one, asking, "Is this it?" A rap is given for each, signifying "no," until the right one is reached, when three loud raps are given. The medium, too, invariably watches the picking over process, it will be noticed, which is

very significant, taken in connection with the raps coming just at the right ballot. Sometimes in doing the mixing act the medium, "accidentally" of course, knocks a few of them off the edge of the table, and carelessly kicks one away back under the chair or settee. In this case the skeptics are unable to find the designated ballot on the table. The "spirits" say "no" to every one. Then the medium suddenly discovers that some have fallen on the floor and artlessly murmurs "perhaps it is on the floor." These are then picked up one by one, and strange to say, the right one is there, generally the one that has been kicked under the chair. This is always greeted with applause, and is regarded as a grand test of spirit power.

Some one will ask, "If the act of opening the ballots can not be seen by the audience, how do you know she does it that way?" The answer is this: Persons who suspected the method watched her motions carefully from various stand-points until they felt sure of the fact. Then, on three or four different evenings, several of them took a position at a window directly in the rear of the medium and but four or five feet distant. This window had closed blinds, through the slats of which the observers watched the whole process, saw the ballots arranged in a ridge, saw the medium open several of them with her right hand, and they lay open upon the table for several minutes. One evening an officer of the society employing her was called, and he, too, saw the open ballots, and saw her close them after reading them. It was the third evening of this back window watch that the society officer was called, and after that the balcony or plank walk under that window was closed to all would-be intruders. Did the society take cognizance of this discovery of fraud—too palpable to be passed over by honest people? Not any.

"INDEPENDENT" SLATE-WRITING.

There are many different ways of producing so-called independent slate-writing, and they are nearly all variations of two methods—substitution and the silicate flap. Occasionally chemicals are used, but they are not practicable in many cases. Where mediums own their homes, carpet slides, trap doors, sliding panels and drapery hangings are used to advantage, and remarkable manifestations are given, by the aid of these appliances and confederates. Sometimes the

sitter is placed with his back to and near hanging portieres, or a sliding panel. A pair of clean slates are handed him and examined. He writes a question to some spirit friend, on a piece of paper, or on the slate, puts the paper between the slates, secures them with a rubber band, and the medium takes the slate, holds it a few minutes on the sitter's shoulder or top of his head. The sitter is willing to swear that no human power could have written upon the slate, yet in a few moments the slates are opened and found to be full of writing with the questions answered. A confederate behind the curtains or panel had noiselessly and deftly exchanged the first pair of slates for another pair, fixed the first pair and returned them in like manner. This can be done to the sharpest sitter without detection, unless he is "onto" the trick.

The pad method most generally used is to have silicate or black cardboard sheets cut to exact size of the slate, inside the frame (silicate is best for critical audiences, but black cardboard or most any old thing will go when all present are credulous.) In this method the slates have been previously prepared with the names and messages (procured as explained in previous pages) which are concealed by the false flaps. Where one slate only has writing only one flap is required, and two where both slates are written upon. Where one flap is used the slates are shown apparently perfectly clean. The slates are then put together, the written one underneath, and the two secured with a rubber band. After the sitter has held them awhile, or perhaps they have been hung on the chandelier a few moments, the medium turns the slates over and removes the upper one—the prepared one. This leaves the flap on the lower or clean slate, which is then laid aside, so as not to be examined by the sitter or audience. There are many variations of the flap method, and many ways of getting rid of the false flap without detection. Some let it drop into the lap, when a table is between the parties. Others have the side of the flap that goes next the writing covered with a piece of newspaper, and lay the slate face down upon a newspaper lying upon a table or the floor. When the slate is picked up of course the flap remains on the newspaper and is not noticed. Others have a piece of sticky fly paper fastened underneath the table-top. When the slate with the pad on is held under the table a few moments to give the "spirits" a chance to do

the writing, the slate is pressed against the piece of fly paper, the pad stays right there and the slate is withdrawn filled with writing. Where the sitter brings his own slates, which are thrown upon the floor, or hung upon the gas pendant, then taken down and found filled with writing, it is a trick, just the same. The medium makes a "switch" and exchanges or substitutes a pair that looks like the sitter's, fixes the slates under cover of the table, then picks up the slates from the floor, makes another switch, and hands the sitter his own, all properly fixed and written upon. Some may doubt this and insist that their slates could not have been changed—"were not out of their sight for an instant," etc. But we can in all truth assure them it was done as we have described. You know the hand is quicker than the eye, when the operator is an expert. And we are here to tell you that the most successful and prosperous professional mediums are experts in their business. They cannot succeed otherwise.

Another plan used by one of the most popular slate-writing mediums, is to have one large sized slate and a pile of smaller ones, the latter being cloth-bound school slates. The large slate is his "magnetized" slate, and is always in his hands when giving a sitting. It serves to conceal the prepared slate, which is held underneath the large one. This is always prepared in advance with a message that will fit almost anyone, and the signature left to be filled in later. The sitter is seated at a table or stand on which is a pile of similar slates and some cards and small envelopes. He is directed to write one or more names of "spirit" friends on a card and seal it up in an envelope. The medium takes the envelope, holds it to his forehead a moment "to get your magnetism," apparently hands it back or lays it on the table in front of the person, who is then asked to wash and wipe clean the pile of ten or a dozen slates. This gives the operator a chance to "fix" the slate he has partly prepared. He opens (under cover of the large slate) the envelope that the victim prepared, reads the names, and questions, if any, fills in the names and answers, and is ready for the final act—getting the prepared slate into the hands of the victim without detection. Taking a seat directly in front of the sitter, who has washed and dried the pile of slates, he (the medium) asks the other to take two of the slates in his hands—any two. He then takes one of these in his own hands for

a moment, to "see if it is washed clean" and directs the sitter to hand him the envelope supposed to contain the names. When the sitter turns away for a moment to reach for the envelope, a quick turn of the large slate brings the prepared one on top—written side down. This the medium then places on the other slate held by the sitter and a rubber band is placed around them. The sitter is directed to sit, perhaps twenty minutes with the slates in his hands, after which he opens them and finds one covered with writing—in colors, perhaps—with one or more of the names he wrote on the card. At the close of the sitting the medium usually asks permission to open and read the sealed envelope (which of course is the dummy he substituted, and this gives him an opportunity to change again, and the sitter is handed back his own envelope. This is a very convincing method of getting "independent" slate-writing, in a private sitting.

It is a rule among slate-writers to not give or use the same method twice with the same sitter, unless he is an exceptionally "easy mark," for the same reason that a magician will never perform the same trick twice before the same audience.

Another method used by the above mentioned medium is this: A pile of slates, say a dozen or so, are placed on the table and the sitter directed to examine, wash thoroughly and dry all of them. The medium, during this operation, is getting a "message" on his large slate "automatically," and after the slates are washed he carelessly places it on top of the pile, and shows the message to the sitter. He then takes away the large slate, which leaves the prepared slate that he had underneath it, now on the top of the pile. Then taking the two top slates, places a rubber band around them and hands to the sitter to hold. Of course, when open, the slate is found to contain a message. This method is generally used for the second sitting with a customer, and the medium already has the names to give messages from.

Some mediums place the slates under your chair, if they have had no chance to fix them for you. In such cases either a slide is prepared by which the slate is conveyed to a helper in an adjoining room, or the helper pulls it to within his reach by means of a hook on the end of a stick. Usually there is a crack under the door large enough to let the slate pass through, and the victim is seated by design in a position favorable for that purpose. This scheme is also used

for giving sittings where sealed letters are to be answered. The helper in the other room is very useful in many ways.

Some slate writers, most generally females, have a number of pockets concealed in their clothing, and by this means do very clever work without detection. They can carry several prepared slates, and it is very easy to ring them in on a customer.

To get writing on the inside of a sitter's slates when they are simply tied together, or fastened with a rubber band, is an easy proposition—if you know how. You have a piece of soft slate pencil always with you. Seat the victim at a table, you on the opposite side. You hold one end of the slates, he the other, under the table for fifteen or twenty minutes, talking all the time to occupy his mind. During this time manage to rest your end of the slate on your knee, then write carefully with the pencil on the outside of the slate, whatever you wish, the more the better. Then, on some pretext, manage to turn the slate over to bring the writing underneath. After a time remark that it is time something was written, and bring the slates to the top of the table, being careful to keep the writing concealed underneath. Untie the slates and open. Of course there is nothing there. Say, "We will try it again." Put in a small—very small piece of pencil, and place the slates together again, being careful to reverse the previous order, which would bring the written side of the slate inside. Tie up again and let him hold them any way you think of. Of course he will be delighted to find writing on the inside of his own slates "that never left his hands or his sight," and he will boom you as a wonderful medium.

In giving sittings slate writing mediums are governed by circumstances as to the method they shall use. Each has several. One way is to juggle the slates, and practice makes perfect in this as in other things. Take two slates, one side of one being written on. The trick is to show the three empty sides repeatedly and lead the audience to think they have seen all four sides, and that they were all clean. Hold one slate in each hand, the written side toward you and away from the audience. Show both sides of the empty one, turning it deliberately. Then direct attention to the visible side of the other, and place the two together, the last one on top. The writing is now inside, and you show the bottom or

under side once more. A slick operator can make this very effective.

Chemicals are seldom used by professionals in slate writing. One method is to dissolve small pieces of zinc in muriatic acid. Write with this upon a slate, and you have a writing that will not rub out. When you wash the slate with water the writing disappears completely. Upon drying the writing appears bright and clear as if just written with a pencil. But the slate will be no good for anything else, as the writing is eaten into it by the acid.

A very sharp trick of some mediums is to arrange with a stationer or some one located near their rooms who keeps slates, to sell prepared slates furnished by the medium, to certain customers. For instance: You prepare a number of slates, of the kind kept by that party, with some general messages and pictures that will fit any one. These are neatly wrapped up in pairs and put away in a handy place. A sitter comes to you with his own slates. He is sharp and a hard one. You sit a little with his slates and your "guide" tells you the slates are no good, that good results cannot be obtained with them. You suggest that such a store, near by, keeps good slates of a quality that always seems to give best results. You instruct him to get a certain make of slate, and by that token the merchant knows just what to give him. He shows him a pair from his stock and lets him examine them thoroughly, wraps them up and—secretly exchanges them for the prepared ones. The customer goes back with them and is delighted to get a beautiful message and picture on new slates that he was "absolutely certain" could not have been done by mortal hand. The storekeeper of course gets a small rake-off for his trouble.

A pure nitrate of silver pencil is sometimes used with good results. Write with one of these, breathe upon the writing and it will disappear. Wet it with salt water and it comes out again bright and clear and white.

Some mediums are expert at writing with a pencil held between the toes. They put a slate on the floor underneath the table, grasp the sitter's hands with their own, and a written message comes on the slate. The medium wears slippers and has the toe of his right stocking cut off. With a bit of pencil between the great toe and the next he does the "spirit" writing.

We occasionally find a slate-writing medium who gives

public slate-writings in a hall, before large audiences, and if there are none present who know his method, it is usually a success. The advertisement invites the audiences to bring their own slates, and they do so, sometimes a hundred or more. Of course it is explained that it may not be possible for all to get writing on their slates, but the medium "will do the best he can if all will give him their best thoughts, etc., to make the conditions good." After the opening music, and a talk upon "conditions," the medium passes through the audience and touches each slate. During this performance it is usual for some "skeptical" present to interrupt the medium repeatedly with a demand that writing be produced upon his particular slates. He is awfully skeptical, and "knows it can't be done." Finally the medium, apparently much irritated, offers to try, if the skeptic will allow him to read to the audience whatever may come on the slates. This is agreed to, and the performance continues. At the close the slates are opened and perhaps a dozen or more, including the skeptic's, are found to contain writing, some in various colors. This always brings forth applause from the believers in the audience, and the skeptics are mystified. The trick is very simple. The slates with writing on are prepared beforehand and brought by friends or assistants of the medium. The persistent skeptic was also an assistant—a paid one, usually, and acts his part well. This method also offers an excellent opportunity for the introduction of several sensational tests.

A very successful plan for getting slate-writings in dark circles, is to have the audience bring their own slates, and place them in a pile on a table near the medium. During the seance, after the lights are out, one of the ladies present (a relative or paid assistant of the medium) is taken with a sick or faint spell, and is compelled to go out of the room for awhile. She is carefully let out without lighting up, as that would disturb the conditions. After a time she returns, feeling better. At the close of the seance the light is turned on and some beautiful messages, and perhaps a few pictures are found on the slates on the table. As this work manifestly could not have been done by the medium in the dark, the natural conclusion is that it was the work of spirits. It was—but it was the spirit of the lady who got sick and had to retire. The slates went with her, and were "fixed" in another room, in the light. Returning, she

brought them back and placed them as before on the table, in the same order. This trick is also very handy in the production of other manifestations.

We have not described any of the trick slates, as they are seldom, if ever, used by mediums in these days. As a rule mediums depend upon the quickness of their hand and the confidence of the sitter in their powers. If a medium has at the first interview, either in a hall or private sitting, been able to give a person a "test" that is a good one—that is, something that the person is positive he could not have obtained except from some spirit friend, that person is thereafter a firm believer in the medium's powers, and ready to accept almost anything without question. For this reason mediums of that class are particular to post themselves, by the methods we have described elsewhere, as to the deceased relatives and friends of all the prominent Spiritualists in cities which they visit. Also other items that may be of use. They have been known to visit cemeteries and pick up names and particulars in that way. They sometimes surprise persons by giving them their full names, including the middle name, which is seldom if ever used. This is obtained, in the case of men, from the registry of voters. In some states the entire full name must appear on the register. †

One medium with whom we had a sitting had us write a question and name of a spirit friend on a pad, then tear the sheet off and hold it, folded up. He then took a slate in his lap, went under "control," and wrote a lot of stuff on the slate himself. The purport of it was that the spirit friends were present and would write if possible. The slate was then washed on both sides, before our eyes, and laid in front of us on the table. Presently it was lifted up and found full of writing, answering the question signed with the name of the spirit friend. It was done this way, as we absolutely know now (we didn't then, being very credulous). When the medium wrote under "control," one side of the slate was covered with a silicate pad. He wrote on this pad and on the other side of the slate. While doing this writing he slipped the pad aside (as he wrote in his lap) and under it wrote the answer and name. He had obtained this from the paper pad we had written on. A sheet of carbon paper under the sheet had copied the writing there. When washing the slate of course he washed off the writing on the silicate

pad. Then this pad was secretly dropped in his lap, and the slate placed writing downward, in front of us. We were willing to swear the slate was clean on both sides when laid down. You see it is not always safe to judge from appearances.

Questions folded and placed between two slates, which are then tied together, are easily removed, answered and returned by mediums who do that sort of work. The inside edge of the frame is whittled down so it will not catch the folded paper. Thus prepared, a thin wedge is inserted, the slates pried slightly apart, the paper slips out, the answer is written, and the paper returned. This is very easily done by covering the slates and working under the cover.

The simplest and crudest form of fake slate-writing is still practiced by a few mediums, and they find many patrons among the blindly credulous. The medium holds the slate in her lap, grasping it with her right hand, the thumb uppermost, and covering both slate and her hand with a dark cloth or shawl, to produce the necessary darkness. Soon a faint scratching noise is heard on the slate and it is assumed that the "spirits" are writing. Probably the medium will be talking all the time, giving names or describing spirits. When the slate is shown, a scrawl of writing—or rather alleged writing—is found upon what was the under side of the slate. If the scrawl (it is seldom more than that) cannot be read by the sitter, the medium can always translate it. In such cases it is generally taken for granted by the sitter that it was a physical impossibility for the medium herself to have done the writing. A little practice, however, is all that is necessary to produce the very meagre amount of writing that generally comes. Of course the writing must be done backwards, and with the forefinger, under the nail of which it is easy to conceal a small piece of slate pencil. Some mediums have a tiny pocket in the clothing which contains the bit of pencil, and is located where it is handy to reach and yet cannot be noticed. This trick can be improved by the medium continuing the writing on the other side while the sitter is reading that which was first written. This also is difficult, but can be successfully done by practice, with an "easy" sitter, without detection.

Another very good trick is for the medium to take four or five slates in his hand and, standing beside the sitter, a little in the rear, so he cannot be watched closely, hand them one

by one to the sitter and ask him to examine and wash them, to be certain there is no cheating. Each slate, after being washed and wiped thoroughly, is handed back to the medium, who puts it on the bottom of the pile in his hand. One of these slates has always been prepared with a written message of some sort. When the medium reaches this one he deftly turns the pile over and hands the sitter one that has already been washed and dried. This completes the number held by the medium, and the sitter is as certain as he can be that he has seen and washed every slate in the lot. And when the medium lays the slates out on the table, and after a season of waiting one is found filled with writing, there is no doubt in the sitter's mind that the work was all straight. Perhaps he takes the slate home and treasures it for years as a sacred possession. There are thousands of slates thus treasured in homes of Spiritualists as sacred relics that were wholly prepared by some rascally medium without a trace of spirit aid. Even where the parties claim to recognize the handwriting of the spirit supposed to have written the communication, a faithful comparison of the same with some actual writing of the deceased would dispel the illusion, unless the person is so far gone mentally that he is incapable of comparison.

BLOOD WRITING.

The medium obtains the desired names by means of the ballot game, and takes his opportunity during the seance to write the name on his arm a little ways above the wrist, with a sharp stick or toothpick point. The cuff is turned down again until the proper time, when the sleeve is turned up, the skin rubbed a little, when the name appears in bright red letters. This is also a very convincing trick to those who do not know the secret. In the case of a sitter whom the medium knows and has given sittings to before, the names and other items are all prepared beforehand.

SPIRIT PICTURES.

Spirit pictures, so-called, on slates, handkerchiefs, etc., are regarded as a great test by many test-hunters, as they of course suppose they are done almost instantaneously, or "while they wait." As a matter of fact they are always prepared beforehand, except those on handkerchiefs, which are

easy to produce at any time if you are fixed for it. The slate pencil portraits so nicely done are made this way: You take the printed picture you wish to copy, having first whitened the slate over evenly with a slate pencil. Dampen the back of the picture slightly and lay it, face up, on the white spot on the slate. Then with a sharp-pointed stick or pencil trace the outlines of the picture. Remove the paper and fill in what is necessary with a slate pencil.

For the handkerchief picture, take the printed picture and with an indelible or copying pencil trace all the lines of the picture, putting more or less time on it according to the quality of work you wish to produce. You can prepare as many as you wish and have them ready for use. All that is necessary to transfer the picture to the sitter's handkerchief is to moisten the corner of the handkerchief and press the prepared portrait upon it. This can be done in a very brief time, and you can find opportunity to do the work very easily without being seen. Many devout Spiritualists are preserving with tender care pictures produced in this way. It is best done in a cabinet, or behind a screen.

Paintings in oil on slates are always done beforehand, and brushed over with poppy oil at the seance to make them look fresh, if that effect is desired. Some mediums keep a supply of painted slates and porcelains on hand and dispose of them to victims at from \$2 to \$5 each, which nets them quite a profit. Where the medium is not an artist, the work, which is not elaborate, can be done by some cheap artist at low rates.

So-called "spirit pictures" are sometimes produced instantaneously, almost, on blank pieces of paper. The late queen of Theosophy, Madame Blavatsky, is said by Col. Olcott to have performed one of her "miracles" in producing an excellent photographic picture instantaneously upon a piece of paper by simply covering it with a blotter. Any photographer can make a picture for you, called the "magic photograph." The picture is first printed in the usual way on solio paper. Then it is bleached out with bi-chloride of mercury, leaving the paper perfectly blank. A blotter dampened with a solution of hypo and laid on the picture will bring it out clear as before. The Madame was an old medium before she struck the theosophy "snap," and knew plenty of their tricks.

SPIRIT PAINTINGS, ETC.

If investigators of spiritual phenomena, so-called, would but use in this the same degree of caution that they do in their ordinary business affairs, to avoid being defrauded, the practice of trickery in Spiritualism would not prove quite so lucrative. So-called spirit paintings and drawings of departed friends, guides, etc., have parted more well-meaning but credulous people from their hard-earned savings than all the green-goods and gold-brick swindlers in the country. We do not pretend to give all the methods employed in working this game, but present a few of those in most common use. ✕

Some mediums keep in stock a supply of cheap oil paintings and drawings of different kinds, to be used as occasion requires. For instance, an apparently blank canvas is taken into a cabinet with a medium, and in a few moments the same is shown to the audience or sitter covered with a very fair painting, the colors not yet dry. This may be done in two ways. In one the painting— one on hand—has been neatly covered with another piece of artists' canvas, tacked over it in such a way that even close inspection will not detect it. As soon as the medium is out of sight in the cabinet, he quietly removes the outer covering, rubs the picture with a little poppy oil, and there is your spirit painting. †

A solution of zinc white and water may be applied to any varnished painting, concealing it completely, and at any time can be removed with a wet sponge. This method is also used sometimes in place of above.

A picture or drawing made with concentrated solutions of sulfocyanide of potassium, ferrocyanide of potassium, and tannin, will be colorless and invisible until sprayed by an atomizer with a weak solution of tincture of iron, when it comes out in three colors. The first solution comes out red, the second blue, and the third black. This picture can be brought out in the light before the eyes of the audience or sitter, by a clever manipulation of the sprayer. With these materials many wonderful things are done in the way of spirit "art work." ✕

Some operators use a very complete system of substitution, and can deceive even the smartest.

The only way in which you can be sure that you are getting a genuine spirit picture painted is to furnish your own canvas, mark it unmistakably, then keep your eye on it ✕

every moment. Even then you are liable to be fooled if you are not extremely sharp-sighted. The claim that many of these portraits are recognized as departed friends is very much open to doubt. Some of these testimonies that have been traced up come from parties financially interested with the medium. Others come from good, honest souls who, when pressed, admit that while the resemblance is marked, they are not positive that the pictures are those of their friends—that there is a doubt about it.

So-called spirit photos are made in different ways and the same may be said of them as of the paintings, in regard to recognitions. The writer has known personally of cases where the same spirit faces appeared on pictures of half a dozen persons of different families, and were recognized by each as relatives. In some cases the faces are recognized because some medium told them it was such a person, or a "guide" perhaps.

These ghostly photos are made in different ways, nearly every medium for this phase having his own method. Double exposure and double printing are the most common, and they have variations, or different processes of doing the same thing. It is indeed surprising how so many apparently intelligent and even shrewd people are taken in by this very transparent fraud.

SPIRIT TYPEWRITING.

There are a few mediums who profess to have the phase of independent typewriting. They sit in a dark cabinet with a machine and turn out typewritten messages in any quantity, the machine being rapidly operated by unseen intelligences, as claimed. This is one of the easiest tricks and almost impossible to detect, yet it is a fraud on the face of it. The messages are all prepared in advance and are in the medium's pocket. A lot of blank paper is displayed, the keys are manipulated rapidly in any old way by the medium or an assistant, and the prepared messages are handed out as being produced on the machine then and there, which they are not. Of course any one familiar with a typewriting machine may do a certain amount of writing in the dark, but it is slow work, and in such cases an infantile "cabinet guide" is supposed to be learning to write, sometimes turning out two or three messages at a seance.

This is such a transparent fake that we shall give it no further attention.

THE "FIRE TEST."

There are a few mediums who claim power given from the spirit world to resist fire and heat. They handle coals of fire, hot lamp chimneys, pass their hands through flames, etc. This is an old trick—older than any of us. One-half ounce of camphor gum dissolved in two ounces of pure Scotch whiskey, with one ounce quicksilver and one ounce liquid storax, mixed and applied to the inside of the hands and fingers will enable any one to do the same thing.

Dissolve all the salt you can in a teacup of water, and in another cup dissolve a tablespoon of common soda, in warm water. Mix the two and articles dipped therein are fire-proof in a measure, and can be passed through fire without injury. This is another trick of the "fire test" medium.

Articles soaked in strong alum water are also fire proof to a certain extent.

SPIRIT TELEGRAPHY.

This is another very transparent fake that has had its day, but is now not often met with. A telegraph sounder in a box, rattling off messages that none but the medium could understand, was at one time considered a remarkable manifestation of spirit power. But when it became known that the lid of the box pressed upon the key of the instrument just enough to make it rattle, as is a fact, interest in it subsided somewhat, though there are yet some who will not believe but that it is all right and genuine. There are actually some Spiritualists who will not believe that there is any fraud in any of these manifestations. If you give them a fake slate-writing, and then show them how it is done, they will insist that you are a medium and the writing was genuine, but that you are obsessed by spirits who are trying to ruin Spiritualism.

In the above method of spirit telegraphy the lid of the box is fixed so as to just touch the key, which is so finely adjusted in tension that a slight pressure of the medium's hand will make it work. Unless the medium understands telegraphy he will not knowingly give a sitting to one who does.

TRUMPET TALKING.

This is a phase of "manifestation" that is supposed to be very convincing as a proof of spirit return. As generally practiced by professional mediums it is a rank fraud through-

out. If you will notice, when you attend a trumpet seance, if you are not known to be "easy," you are not allowed to sit near the medium, who is always flanked by his own friends or accomplices. The trumpet talking is generally done by the medium, except in special cases, when, to test the medium, you may be allowed to hold his or her hands. In such case the trumpet is manipulated by one of the accomplices. This is in dark seances. In some cases the talking is done in the light. That is, the trumpet is in sight, or partly so, and the medium in the cabinet talks through it by means of a rubber pipe or hose attached to the mouthpiece. Sometimes a second trumpet, made in telescope fashion and concealed in the medium's clothing, is used in the cabinet and the auditors naturally conclude that the sound comes from the trumpet that is in sight. In fact it is hard to distinguish the difference. The claim is made that the voice is often clearly recognized as that of some friend or acquaintance. The imagination does a great deal sometimes, and suggestion is a very potent aid in making these seances a success.

One medium we know has a cabinet and gives seances in the "light," that is with a dim light, sufficient, however to see everyone in the room. The trumpet is laid on the floor a few feet in front of the cabinet, in full view of the sitters. Voices in plenty come from the trumpet, both talking and singing. This looks very convincing on the face of it, but an examination would reveal the fact that a small rubber hose extended from the mouth of the trumpet into the cabinet, concealed by a rug or the carpet, and through this the talking was done by the medium.

Where the medium is permanently located in his or her own home, an elaborate arrangement of speaking tubes renders the giving of first-class trumpet seances an easy matter. These are also used in materializing seances with good effect. As a rule, however, professional mediums of the class described in this book are migratory—only a few days or weeks in a place—and therefore rely upon their nerve, their confederates, and the credulity of their sitters for success.

When a person tells you that he has seen a trumpet float around the room in a bright light, tapping the sitters on the head, talking and going through a whole lot of strange maneuvers without any assistance from mortals, sprinkle a little salt on the tale before you swallow it.

FLOWER MATERIALIZATION.

A very pretty and popular phase of mediumship is the materialization of flowers and fruits. This is always done in dark circles or with the aid of the cabinet, which amounts to the same thing. The medium may be searched carefully, and after the lights are shut off, beautiful flowers, with the fragrance and sometimes dew as if just plucked, are handed around to the sitters. Some firm believers actually assert that certain flowers called for, mentally, by them, were given them without a mistake. A vivid imagination and an earnest desire to help the medium and convince the unbelievers of the truth of spirit agency in these matters, too often accounts for these wondrous tales. The method of producing these flowers in so mysterious a manner, apparently, is very simple. They are procured, as fresh as possible, previous to the seance, and concealed in such a manner that the medium can reach them when wanted; sometimes in the cabinet or chair, or, if there are skeptics present and the medium is to be searched, an assistant takes charge of them and they are handed in to her at the proper time. This is easily done without detection. An assistant, who sometimes very vehemently asserts disbelief in such phenomena (this is a very convincing trick) may be allowed to sit next to the cabinet, and hands the flowers in. This game of the alleged skeptic is used in nearly all fake seances of every kind with good effect, which accounts for many of the statements we hear and read of regarding phenomena alleged to occur under rigid test conditions. The narrators—very often good honest souls, anxious to convert the world to our beautiful philosophy—sometimes firmly believe that these assistants are bona fide skeptics and sincerely think they are stating facts. The fake mediums understand this and work the game for all it is worth.

A prominent and much-advertised flower medium in Europe was exposed in a most thorough manner some time ago, who worked the trick much as we have described. A believer became skeptical, and set himself at work to find out whether the work was "straight" or otherwise. In detective jargon, he "piped off" the medium for several months, following her from city to city, until he finally got her "dead to rights," found where her assistant purchased the flowers, and traced them direct to the seance room, and saw them "materialized." And still there are many who yet uphold

this fraud and insist that she is honest, but shamefully persecuted. It is the same in America. There are many alleged mediums for all these phenomenal phases who have been repeatedly exposed in their nefarious work, yet in every city they visit they find plenty of earnest so-called Spiritualists who will stand by and protect them.

FORM MATERIALIZATION.

Of all the phases of Spiritualistic phenomena this is regarded as the highest and most wonderful, and for years it has been counterfeited with great success. The bogus article, however, has been so often exposed that great care and every precaution is taken by those who are in that business to prevent skeptics and "grabbers" from being present at their seances. Only those who are known to be firm believers in the phenomena and easy to fool are allowed in the circles. Persons who are properly vouched for by the faithful as "safe" and not liable to disturb the "conditions" are also admitted—if they have the price.

The first requisite for a successful materializing medium is "nerve." They require this in a large degree. Then they need a few yards of gauzy lace-like drapery, a few masks and wigs and material for "spirit lights." The white gauzy material is used for the spirit robes, and is usually saturated with luminous paint—not phosphorus, as some have asserted. Luminous paint is harmless, and shines in the dark with a ghostly, bluish glow, after being exposed to the sunshine during an hour or two. Some mediums give part of the seance in total darkness for the purpose of utilizing this luminous stuff. One who is ingenious can produce a large variety of startling effects in that way.

As we have explained already, some mediums who are permanently located have their apartments fitted up for the business, with secret panels, trap doors, etc. One in San Francisco has been in the business for many years and accumulated a small fortune. He has a home which is elaborately and expensively fitted up with all the latest appliances for the work, and several seances a week are held to crowded rooms at 50 cents per head. He is probably the most accomplished artist in that line in the country if not in the world.

His manifestations are startling and defy detection by any ordinary methods. Yet it is all fake work, and known to be such.

The traveling medium depends more on his nerve and the credulity of his auditors, and the assistance of confederates, for his demonstrations. As a rule he or she does not have much paraphernalia. A few yards of the gauzy stuff and a few wigs or masks is all he needs. If a woman, she carries the supplies in concealed pockets in her dress. If a search of her person is demanded she prepares for that also. An assistant takes charge of the outfit and passes it to her in the cabinet. If a man, he either has a place of concealment arranged in the cabinet, or the stuff is handed to him by an assistant. This is easily done without detection. In one case the assistant makes a little talk about conditions, etc., and stands in front of the cabinet while he talks. This gives the medium a chance to secure the stuff from beneath the assistant's coat behind. Then, with the light turned down quite low, and with the susceptible auditors' minds prepared by solemn music and the psychological influences of the surroundings it is not a difficult matter to give an entertainment that will prove satisfactory to most of those present. Everything is arranged to provide against any danger of exposure. The medium's friends and assistants are always placed in the front row of spectators, and any strangers present are closely watched, so as to head off any attempt to grab the spirits.

Ordinary forms are personated by the medium with the white stuff thrown over him. Two or three forms can be shown at once by the medium holding up the folds of his drapery in either hand at a short distance. In the dim light this can be made to answer that purpose perfectly, as the audiences are not usually very critical, but take it for granted that everything is all right and the forms as perfect as it is possible for the "cabinet controls" to produce under the existing conditions. In fact a white spot of stuff will usually be accepted as "the best the spirit can do" at the time. There is always a promise that the dear spirit will come plainer and more perfect when it "gets stronger."

The spirit usually materializes and dematerializes in the seclusion of the dark cabinet, but some mediums have sufficient "power" to enable the departed to build up a form apparently in full view of the audience, and to dissolve it in the same way. This is also very easy to do when you know how. The light is always turned down very low when this effect is to be produced. The medium, or an assistant, emerges

from the cabinet, covered from head to foot with a black cloth or mantle, and is of course invisible to the audience. Under this mantle the individual is enveloped in the luminous white robe or covering we have before mentioned. Now, standing at a safe distance from the members of the audience or circle, she pulls aside a little of the black material at the bottom, and a luminous white spot is seen. All eyes are now riveted upon this spot, and a whisper goes round that a spirit is coming up from the floor. More of the black is gradually drawn aside, until it is all removed and the spirit form is full grown and walks around whispering to persons here and there in the room. To dematerialize, the process is simply reversed. Of course, in the first operation the black covering is pulled back into the cabinet by an assistant, or concealed in the mediums' clothing, and the light is then increased somewhat, so the audience can all see the spirit. When about to dematerialize, the light is again lowered, the black covering brought out, and gradually drawn over the white form, and it appears to sink into the floor. One Boston medium used to have the side walls of the seance-room hung with black cloth to the height of about five feet. This cloth was fastened only at the top, and in the dim light the bogus spirits could go from the cabinet to the rear of the room, behind the sitters, without being seen, as she crept behind the black curtain. Here we had some fine examples of "instantaneous" materializing. A full grown spirit, clothed in white would pop up behind the circle, or on a sofa in the room, or beside some one in the circle, while all were intently watching the cabinet. This was considered a marvelous manifestation, but we can now all see how very simple it was after all. In fact most of the tricks of bogus mediums owe their success to their extreme simplicity.

Where there is no chance to use trap doors or sliding panels, or folding doors that slide into the wall, there are confederates in the audience, who, in the darkness, slip into the cabinet and assist in the entertainment. One medium generally, in turning down the gas, just as the seance is to commence, "accidentally" of course, turns the last jet entirely out. While she is profusely apologizing and fumbling for a match, the confederate slips quietly into the cabinet. In this case the last part of the performance is the dark seance, with luminous forms, spirit lights, etc., and before the close of this the assistant is again in her place among

the spectators, and when the lights are lit no one is in the cabinet but the medium, and she can be searched for paraphernalia with perfect safety—to her.

It is a fad with most all materializing mediums to have a little "cabinet control," with some such a name as Effie, Rosebud, Wildflower, etc., whose childish prattle or quaint Indian dialect serves to amuse the audience and entertain them during the necessary "stage waits" while the medium is resting or preparing for the next impersonation. This requires considerable practice on the part of the medium, who also needs to practice up on men's voices. There is, by the way, usually a male spirit who is supposed to do the fine chemical work in building up the materialized form. He is generally called "Doctor," and has a more or less bass voice, according to the medium's success in the ventriloquial line. The little child is sometimes made to appear at the opening of the cabinet, and is always greeted with loving epithets from the gushing ones among the spectators. This appearance is generally simply a white cloth held up to resemble a form two or three feet in height. Sometimes a mask is used for the face, but generally that is not necessary, the "spirituality" of the audience leading them to see a face there anyhow. One medium in California sometimes uses her knee. Kneeling on one knee just inside the opening in the cabinet, she bares the other and drapes it in the white material. There stands little "Effie" as natural as life, and many of the audience respond to her invitation to "come and kiss me." Those who do the kissing do not even marvel that they can distinguish no eyes nose or mouth in the dim light. And they remark, "how natural the little darling looks" and "what a sweet child."

Some mediums operate a little different from what we have described in materializing a form from the floor, and dematerializing. In this method the medium or assistant, clad in the luminous white covering, which is concealed by the black robe, which renders her perfectly invisible in the darkness, comes out of the cabinet and stretches herself at full length upon the floor, face down and head toward the audience. Soon she raises her head a trifle and at the same time draws back a little of the black covering. A luminous white spot thus appears apparently on the carpet. The spot grows larger, and soon a full-sized head is seen, and there issues from the same a voice—generally a whisper, greeting

the company present with a pleasant "Good evening, friends." This is always heartily responded to, with numerous "Oh, how lovely," "Isn't that grand?" etc. Then the form continues to grow, as the operator slowly raises herself to an erect position. Sometimes, for effect, the form will apparently collapse once or twice during the building up process, being "very weak," as explained by the spokesman of the circle. When the form reaches full size the black covering is concealed, and the fully formed spook remains for a longer or shorter period, and finally backs into the cabinet, or reverses the building up process, and sinks into the floor—apparently. During the building up or disappearing process it will be noticed that the light is always turned down very low so that almost total darkness prevails. Otherwise it would not be safe to attempt that particular trick. Where the spirits are supposed to build up their forms entirely in the seclusion of the cabinet, more light is allowed, but there is never a light in a fake materializing circle that is bright enough to render everything distinct, notwithstanding the numerous assertion to the contrary. When you hear persons telling about having the spirits come out in a "brilliant light" and show faces that are unmistakably recognized as those of departed friends, and when you hear tales about taking the spirit by the hand and having it melt away at their feet, the hand finally dissolving in the hand that held it, all in a good light, put it down as a fairy tale inspired by zeal for the cause or a financial interest with the medium. We are speaking now of seances given by professional mediums to promiscuous circles with an entrance fee, and we make no exceptions whatever when speaking of this class, no matter if the medium is endorsed by the highest Spiritualistic authority in the land. We know that some of the brightest and most prominent of our workers have been deceived in these matters. And many of them will continue to be deceived just so long as they rely upon the so-called test conditions allowed by these professionals. Deception is as much a business with these folks as it is with the famous magicians of the stage, and they use all their knowledge and cunning in devising means by which to produce their bogus manifestations while submitting to conditions of test that apparently are perfect. Ever since fakery in Spiritualism began the idea has been instilled into the minds of investigators that in order to obtain good manifestations by

the spirits the sitter must throw aside all skepticism and come to the seance prepared to accept everything as genuine, otherwise he places a bar between himself and spirit friends. Also that if he should happen to see any fraud it is because he "has fraud in his heart."

We are also gravely informed that whenever a "spirit" is grabbed, and found to be the medium in disguise, it is the work of the spirit operators, who, to save the medium's life which might otherwise be destroyed by the "shock," instantly substituted the medium in the place of the grabbed spirit. If any doubt is expressed as to the reasonableness or sanity of any such explanation, we are told that it is impossible for any of us to understand the power of the "spirit chemists" who boss the job or the laws which control such manifestations. This last statement is not denied, but the instantaneous substitution statement has an exceedingly improbable flavor. For instance, the cases in which spirits have been grabbed are very numerous, and in some cases it has been the medium who was found in the clutches of the grabber. In all other cases it has been an assistant, generally some one from outside the medium's household. If the substitution theory is true, then the spirits must sometimes go out into other homes and seize individuals, without their consent, and transport them through solid walls into the seance-room, and place them into the hands of some determined man—perhaps an officer—in order to prevent shock to the medium. And, remember, this must be done instantly. If we ask the very reasonable question, Why does not the spirit exercise its dissolving or dematerializing power when grabbed, and leave the grabber clutching the empty air, instead of going to all the trouble and waste of force necessitated by the other method we are again told that we cannot understand the mysteries or possibilities of spirit power. Our way certainly seems the easiest, and it would also at once vindicate the medium from any suspicion of fraud.

At one materializing seance we attended a form purporting to be the mother of a young man present came to the opening of the cabinet and held out her hands to her son. He advanced to the cabinet, took the hands with a firm grip and began to pull. He wanted his dear mother to come out of the obscurity that he might be certain of her identity. But she objected, and pulled hard the other way. In fact she struggled fiercely as he persisted. Finally he let go

suddenly, and the spirit struck the wall and then the floor with a tremendous thud. This disarranged "conditions," and the seance broke up. The medium, who was quite a good sized woman, was severely jarred and quite lame for several days. It was certainly cruel of the cabinet controls to put the medium in the spirit's place just at that time and subject her to such a fall.

Another case was that of a medium who while giving a seance received a severe stab, very evidently while personating a spirit. A form had appeared and called a man in the circle to the cabinet. The man was very skeptical and had determined to satisfy himself whether or not it was a sure enough spirit. He argued with himself that if it was a spirit, and he gave it a playful little dig with a knife, it would not be injured, and he would believe. And if it proved to be the medium, she would not be getting any more than was justly coming to her as a fraud and swindler. It is needless to say that the medium got the stab, but she never squealed, nor did she profit by the lesson, for she is still in the business. But she allows no more strangers to come near the cabinet, and the forms that circulate around the room occasionally at her seances are always on the look out for trouble.

The luminous white robe is indispensable for all seances, and a medium can give a very fair seance with no other "properties." When she anticipates a very strict search, with no hope of aid from assistants, as sometimes happens, she can conceal the white stuff very easily, as many yards of the finest netting, such as is used by the "first-class" operators, can be concealed in a very small place. Some female mediums, however, have a novel arrangement by which they can carry into the cabinet all the supplies they want in spite of the strictest search. For instance, one has a black cloth belt made deep enough to hold a great variety of stuff. This is worn around the waist next the skin, and held in place by an elastic band. Over this is the usual black skirt, then the other clothing. When a committee of ladies searches her she disrobes entirely down to this black skirt, which she retains "for modesty's sake" until the skirt provided by the committee is put on over it. Then the black skirt is unhooked and taken off. This leaves her supposedly clothed only in the committee's clothing, which of course is all dark. To satisfy them that all is right she lifts the last skirt as

high as possible and shows the bare skin, and the presence of the useful little belt is not suspected. The rest of the clothing provided is donned, and the performance goes on with the greatest success. Then comes a long letter to the press, telling about the wonderful manifestations produced at Mrs. So-and-So's seance under "conditions that would not permit the least fraud."

The most of the beautifully written accounts of seances have about the same value.

A dear old lady told us some time since, "If you do prove these lovely manifestations to be frauds, you will make me miserable and destroy my belief in any of the doctrines of Spiritualism. I will have no more comfort in this life. It has been my only comfort and consolation for years." We have only this to say, Is it not better to know the truth than to go on for years believing a miserable lie, being a dupe for unscrupulous scoundrels, and being laughed at by them and referred to as a "sucker?" For these fake mediums do, among themselves, have all kinds of fun recounting their experiences with the credulous. The truth must come out sometime and the longer you trust blindly in these people and allow them to rob you of your time and money, the more bitter will be your awakening to the unpleasant truth. A fraudulent test or manifestation of any kind is not only worthless, but is an insult, not only to your intelligence, but to the memory of your spirit friends.

The other California medium we speak of has his rooms fitted up regardless of expense, and gives a really fine entertainment. Trap doors in the ceiling permit his assistants to enter and leave the cabinet easily by means of a ladder that slides up and down noiselessly and smoothly. He has assistants enough at hand with costumes and wigs to produce any sort of form desired. He can trot out a very good imitation of any noted character called for. He also has a chemical which, wetted and thrown upon the floor, will produce a vaporous white form three to six feet in height, that could easily be mistaken for a spirit form, etheralized.

There are other and more complicated methods of producing materialized forms, but those we have given comprise about all that are generally used.

One thing that proves the unreliable character of most materializing manifestations is the fact that various sums ranging from one hundred to one thousand, and even two

thousand dollars, have been offered by skeptics—some of them faithful, intelligent Spiritualists—for the production of even one materialized spirit form by any medium. And none of these offers have been accepted, because there is one very vital “condition”—that the medium must be so situated that he or she cannot personate the form, and there must be no opportunity for confederates. These conditions do not, to a fair-minded person, seem out of place or objectionable, but the mediums claim it would be “beneath their dignity” to accept money that way. Yet it seems their dignity does not disturb them in the least when they are asked to give a seance at two or three dollars per head to thirty or forty auditors, under their own conditions. Very evidently it is the skeptic’s conditions that are objectionable—not his money. The same offers have been repeatedly made to slate-writers and ballot test mediums, with the same result, although the mediums have been urged by the Spiritualistic press, and by their friends to accept the test and “shut the mouths of these blatant skeptics and fraud-hunters.” The fact is, they dare not try it. They know too well what the result would be. And we verily believe that if one of these materializing mediums were to actually see a materialized spirit—a genuine one—it would frighten him or her out of a year’s growth.

In the face of all the testimony of Prof. Crookes and other intelligent people and scientists, we are not prepared to assert that no such thing as a materialized spirit form has ever been produced through the agency of a medium. Will say this, however, after having attended the seances of many of the most prominent mediums in this country for that phase, we have yet to see a form that could not have been produced without the agency of any departed spirit—that was not a fake, in fact.

Another materializing trick that has been used with wonderful success in Europe, and perhaps in this country, is the following: The medium does not use a cabinet. Every opportunity is given the skeptical to satisfy themselves that there is no trickery. The doors and windows are securely locked and sealed. The medium may be thoroughly searched and there is absolutely no chance for him or her to personate a form. The audience is seated in a circle, holding hands, the medium being inside the circle. The room is carefully examined, and there is no possibility of any one being con-

cealed therein to help the medium. Yet, when the lights are out forms—very palpable forms—flit to and fro outside the circle, patting the sitters on the head and face with warm, very material hands, and whispering sweet messages of love and remembrance into their ears. At intervals the light may be suddenly turned on, but nothing can be seen of any spook or accomplice. The circle appears perfect as at first formed. This goes on for an hour or more, the medium meantime moving from one sitter to another in the circle, giving tests and messages. These seances are regarded as very wonderful and convincing, and the medium who originated the idea had all she could do. The seances were crowded every night, and seats were engaged far in advance at a large price. To the uninitiated it would certainly appear to be a sure enough manifestation of spirit power, yet no decarnated spirit had anything to do with it. The locks and seals were all right, and the medium was inside the circle all the time. Yet at one point in the circle were three confederates sitting together. These confederates, one or two of whom were women, were apparently strangers to the medium and exceedingly skeptical about the work. Their pronounced skepticism and evident ignorance (pretended) of spiritual seances would of course do away with the suspicions any of the audience might entertain as to their presence. One of these confederates—the center one—was prepared for the part she was to play. Under her outer clothing was a white robe treated with luminous paint, also a black covering which was kept handy to use in case of emergency. Upon the light being extinguished she would noiselessly leave the circle, which would be immediately closed up by the other two assistants. Covered with the black robe she could flit from one person to another as indicated by the voice of the medium, who would be giving messages inside the circle. Occasionally she would draw aside the black robe and all could see the ghostly form, “coming in its own light,” as the medium explains. Should a light be suddenly flashed, the “form” instantly envelopes herself completely in the black robe, and is practically invisible, as the walls of the room are draped in black for this very purpose. And there is no chance to grab the spirit, for she is outside the circle, behind the sitters, who are sitting with joined hands. But little opportunity, however, is given for any trouble with skeptics, as no one is admitted except he is

vouched for by some of the faithful believers. As a clincher to the manifestations the light may be flashed suddenly several times during the seance, but the form always has a secret warning of the same and is prepared for it. When the time comes for closing, the spook returns to her place in the circle, conceals her paraphernalia, the lights are lit, and all tell what wonderful things happened to them in the way of tests, spirit touches, etc.

Of course the audience were kept singing, or music of some kind, during the seance. This is indispensable in a materializing or dark seance of any sort, as it hides the movements of the medium or assistants. The alleged reason for it is that it creates a harmonious condition in the minds of the sitters and thus aids the manifestations. Some of the singing we have heard at these seances would not be supposed to have that effect on the minds of persons with the least spark of musical taste. It was absolutely horrible, but served its real purpose.

The public has of late been treated to some wonderful stories, in the Spiritualistic press, regarding some alleged manifestations down in Kansas. There seems to be a concerted effort to advertise the medium and boom his work, though how in the name of common sense people can swallow such stuff is beyond us. In all the accounts so far published, stripping them of the "suppositions" and imaginings of the writer, there have been no features described that could not have been produced by any clever medium with the assistance of a few confederates who know their business. We say this with all due respect to the worthy ones among those who vouch for these manifestations. No doubt they believe in their truth, being unable to account for the occurrences in any other way. The appearances from the cabinet, the drawings, type-writings, paintings, etc., described can all be produced by any one or more of the methods described herein. As for the literary matter produced, and upon which so much stress is laid as the production of famous spirit intelligences, there is nothing in it to warrant a belief in such origin. In fact, if it is really the work of the eminent ones named, it is decidedly unworthy of them, and indicates retrogression instead of progression in the after life.

Another phase is where the medium sits in the center,



with the circle complete around him or her. The medium is sometimes tied in the chair, with the hands secured, apparently, to the back or rounds of the chair. The light is put out, and soon the manifestations commence. "Spirit" hands touch the sitters, a fan floats around and gently fans them, a guitar circles over the heads of the people and the strings are twanged, and other queer things occur. After a time the "doings" cease, the light is turned up, and the medium sits there securely tied as at first, perhaps in a dead trance. Usually the tying of the medium is done by some officious "skeptic" (a confederate) and done in such a way that it is easy for the medium to release herself, almost instantly, and as quickly replace the bonds. To the ordinary observer the tying is most securely done. If a real skeptic not in the game insists on tying the medium, she is prepared for that, too, although it is more risky. She will insist upon the knots being made in a certain way, which will give her "slack" enough to release herself. If, however, the tyer insists on his own method and binds her too securely, she has a confederate ready in the circle with a sharp knife, who will cut the bonds at the proper time and release her. In this case the cut rope will be concealed before the light is turned on, and a duplicate rope, just like the other, is shown, but the "power" is too far spent for the "spirits" to tie the medium as before. In case an extra rope has not been provided, the conditions have been spoiled by too much skepticism. Where the medium is not tied, sometimes she keeps up a continuous clapping of the hands to show the circle that it could not be her hands that produce the "manifestations." When the light is out, however, she continues the clapping—on her cheek or forehead—with one hand, while the other is free to do the spook work.

It is claimed that some mediums are lifted from the floor and floated around, even to the ceiling, by spirit power, in these dark seances. This is another case of deception, aided by suggestion and the darkness. It is easy for the medium to produce the impression that she is floating. Standing upon the chair and modulating her voice to produce the effect desired. Thumping the ceiling with the guitar, or with an extension rod, helps out the delusion, and the "spirit" lights also assist. It is well known that in total darkness it is impossible to judge correctly as to the distance from the observer of the small, feeble lights, or of sounds. This fact

is made use of by all materializing and dark circle mediums, and is a great help to them.

Wonderful tales are told of the doings at these seances, but the most of them are put forth by the medium for advertising purposes, and the rest are furnished by credulous and zealous believers who are anxious to have others witness the wonders they verily believe they have witnessed.

THE WIRE CAGE TEST.

Most wonderful tales are told of mediums who have allowed themselves to be locked up in an iron cage in a cabinet, from which they have emerged or been levitated by spirit power without the locks or seals being disturbed. Spirit forms also enter and leave the cabinet at will by the same power, and other wonders take place. It will be noticed that the wire or iron cage used in these seances is always provided by the medium, or some one in "cohoots" with her. They are also always (in fake seances) "trick" cages—that is, they are made in such a way that a person may enter or leave them at will, and the secret of their construction so well concealed that it is impossible for one who has no hint of it to discover it. To give the details here would require more space than we can afford, but a full detailed description of two or three varieties can be found in the work called "Spirit Slate-writing and Kindred Phenomena," by W. E. Robinson. This book also gives many other methods of fake mediums.

If you wish to be positively sure that the manifestations of a wire cage medium are genuine, you can easily satisfy yourself by providing a cage made under your own direction, and that you know is straight and has no trick in it. Then, if forms come out of it or the medium is lifted out while the locks are intact, without any possible aid from confederates, then you can conclude that there is some power behind it that is not understood by mortal man. There are other varieties of trick cabinets, but they are mainly for stage use—for such exhibitions as are given by Anna Eva Fay. On the stage they can be used to produce the most marvelous effects, but are not suited for the seance room, where examination is allowed.

SPIRIT RAPS, LIGHTS, ETC.

There are many methods of producing raps that are easily

mistaken for spirit signals, and different mediums use different methods. Some have their rooms fitted with secret wires and produce the sounds by means of tappers run by electricity. Others have other mechanical helps, but most of them use means best suited to the occasion. One female medium we know has a little contrivance attached to her knee, and it produces distinct raps upon the floor when she presses her knees together. It is principally used in platform work and has given her great prestige. Her skirts completely conceal the operation of the device, and it could not very well be used by a man. Some can produce raps on a table with the hands resting thereon, apparently motionless, the sounds being produced by the contraction of certain muscles in the hand. This power can be obtained by any one with practice. Some produce the sounds on a "Psyche" or sounding box held in the hand. This is generally done by the slipping of the fingers underneath, and is imperceptible to the lookers-on. Others have confederates to do the rapping for them in various parts of the room, in circles. An experienced Spiritualist, who has heard the genuine "raps" is very seldom deceived by the imitation article, however. †

"Spirit lights" are always very easily produced in the dark. Those made by luminous paint on pieces of cloth or cardboard are the handiest, as many devices, such as stars, crosses, anchors, names, etc., can be provided and easily concealed when not in use. These must be thoroughly exposed to the sunlight or a bright artificial light a short time before use, as the luminosity dies out in a few hours. The heads of 100 or 200 parlor matches (red heads) placed in water—about two ounces—and dissolved, the wood being removed, makes a good light when placed in a smooth half-pint flask (a flat one is best). Keep it tightly corked until used. When uncorked for a moment and slightly shaken, the vacant space in the bottle will be filled with a phosphorescent light plainly visible all over a large room. A wire mask held in front of this will give the semblance of a face that will almost invariably be recognized as some friend by susceptible ones in the audience. Parlor matches with the heads slightly dampened and rubbed on the fingers or wall will make a very brilliant "spirit light" for some purposes. Where a cabinet is used, or even without it, a small bull's eye lantern has been often utilized with good effect. Lightning bugs or fireflies have also mystified some circles. A

few of these turned loose in a circle will generally cause a great sensation.

OTHER PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Then there are dark circles for other manifestations, such as the levitation and playing of musical instruments, ringing of bells, etc. In these the custom is to seat the medium between two persons, presumably skeptics, who hold his hands. The light out, music is played, bells rung, hands touch some of those in the circle, spirit lights flit around the room, perhaps a guitar floats around, being thrummed meanwhile, etc. The fact is, one of those holding the medium's hands is an assistant, and lets the hand free to do the work. In some cases both holding his hands are skeptics, in which case the medium takes hold of the wrist of the one on his right. This is just as convincing, as the person is willing to certify, and really thinks, the medium's hand was there all the time. However, the medium did remove his hand for an instant on some pretext, and when he took hold of the arm again a piece of sheet lead about the size of his hand was placed on the arm. The hand could then be withdrawn and the person think it was still there, as the pressure of the lead remains. Before lighting up the lead is removed carefully and concealed in the medium's pocket. The whole secret of these circles is in having one hand free. Spirit stars, lights, names, etc., are made on cloth or cardboard with luminous paint, and concealed when not in use. A telescopic rod that will extend six feet or more and close to six or eight inches, serves to make the spirit touches, float the guitar, etc. The works of a cheap music box are sometimes fitted inside a guitar, and made to play "beautiful music" while floating. Light circles, where the medium sits in front of a curtain, with a skeptic on each side holding his hands, and another curtain covering them all to the chin, are worked in the same way. The lead hand works in here, too.

This last "phase" was recently given several successive Sunday evenings to large audiences, in Boston, by a prominent "medium" and his wife, the latter opening the evening's entertainment with twenty or thirty minutes of "tests" from the book.

Then the man medium seated himself in front of the cabinet curtain, a man was called from the audience to sit

on his right, and a woman to sit on his left, as is customary on such occasions. In this case, before the front curtain was adjusted, the medium grasped the man's left hand with his right, and the woman's right with his left. In this position it was manifestly impossible for him to use either hand without letting go of one or the other. But notice this fact: He grasped their hands—they did not grasp his. This may seem unimportant, but it is the point of the trick, as we will show. After the second curtain was in place, concealing all the hands, the wife of the medium took a seat directly in front of him with her back to the audience, and placed her hands upon the others—outside the curtain. This was explained by the master of ceremonies to be for the purpose of forming a "battery" for the spirits to work with. In reality, the pressure of the woman's hands upon the others enabled the medium to remove his own without the movement being perceptible to those on his right and left. This might not have worked successfully if the parties had been sharp skeptics, but being true believers in the phenomena—they being selected by the medium himself on that account—they were not particular to notice every movement. The presence of the woman in front also served to hide from the audience any movement of the hands that otherwise might be noticed by the skeptical. When all was ready hands began to appear at the various openings of the cabinet, sometimes with great rapidity, so fast that the ordinary eye could not follow, and when the chairman asserted that as many as six hands were appearing at once, of different sizes, many were inclined to accept the suggestion, and no doubt actually believed such to be the case. As a matter of fact the medium's two hands did it all, and you can do the same thing with a little practice. At the close the hands of the woman in front were so powerfully affected by the strong current of "magnetism" that considerable effort and the assistance of the chairman were necessary to enable her to let go (so the chairman stated.) Her struggles and the manipulation by the chairman gave the medium a chance to again grasp the hands of those at his side, and when the curtain in front was removed he was still grasping their hands, and they asserted, probably in good faith, that he had not let go of them for an instant. This trick has been so often exposed that it seems beyond belief that an intelligent audience can be so easily imposed upon.

THE "BAG TEST" FULLY EXPLAINED.

The trick known as the "bag test" is quite a favorite with some, and is regarded as a very convincing test of spirit power by those who do not understand how it is done. A bag of some dark material, large enough to cover the medium up to the neck, with a wide hem and draw string at the open end, is shown to the audience and an examination will show nothing wrong about it. The medium gets into the bag, the mouth of it is drawn close around his neck, and the string securely tied and sealed, yet upon his being placed in the cabinet, or the lights turned out, surprising manifestations will take place. Bells will be jingled, a guitar thrummed, slates written upon, hands shown at the cabinet openings (if in the light) and other things happen, yet upon the curtain being drawn aside, or the lights lit, the medium is found to be still securely fastened in the bag with the knots and seals intact. The whole secret is this: The drawstring is purposely made quite long, and ties at the back of the neck. Opposite the opening, in front, a small opening is left in the hem, and when the bag is being fastened about his neck the medium takes hold of the string through this opening and draws down a few inches of the string, holding it with his finger until needed. When ready for business he simply releases this string, which gives him slack enough to get his shoulders and arms free. It is then easy to make all the manifestations he desires, and get the bag back to its place at a moment's notice. Upon examination the seals and knots have not been disturbed, of course. When being untied he releases the string, and the trick is not discovered.

"PASSING MATTER THROUGH MATTER."

The medium produces a solid iron ring, and after it is examined by those present, hands it to a person to hold, with directions to hold it at arms length in front of him, in his left hand. The medium then has the person grasp his (the medium's) left hand firmly with his right. The curtains of the cabinet are then closed, or the light turned out. In an instant the ring is jerked away from the holder, and when the light is turned on it is found encircling the person's right arm. As the hand of this arm is grasping the medium's hand it seems that the spirits or some other force must have indeed passed matter through matter in order to perform

this feat. The explanation is simple. The medium has a duplicate iron ring on his left arm, concealed by his coat sleeve. As soon as the light is out he snatches the ring from the person's hand, puts it in his pocket, and slips the ring from his left arm onto the person's right, and calls for lights. This is an old trick, but we have seen it cited in the papers as a wonderful demonstration of the power of spirit chemists, the "passing of matter through matter."

CHEMICAL WRITING IN VARIOUS WAYS.

There are various agencies, other than spirit, by which answers to mental and written questions are made to appear upon cards, paper, and other material. Below we give a few of those most easily and commonly produced.

Some mediums use a diluted solution of sulphuric acid to write upon the paper. This is invisible. The message is prepared beforehand, and the paper is to all appearances perfectly blank. For identification the medium generally asks the sitter to write his name or initials on the paper, which is then subjected to heat in some way, usually by holding it over a lamp or near a gas jet. A much easier way is to have an empty fruit jar at hand that has recently been rinsed with strong ammonia. This must be kept tightly covered to prevent the escape of the vapor. Write the message or other matter on the paper with a diluted solution of sulphate of copper. This will also be invisible, and the paper may be closely examined. Then place the paper in the jar, replacing the cover immediately. In a few moments the writing will appear in blue. The jar may be covered with a black cloth during this process, to enable the "spirits" to work better, or the jar may be placed where the sitter or circle can see the writing being done. This is very convincing. Outline portraits may also be produced in this way by using thin paper. Lay it over the picture to be copied and trace the lines with a pen—a clean one—dipped in the copper solution. This will come out beautifully, same as the writing.

Another scheme is to have the sitter write questions on slips of paper or cards. These questions must be such as can be answered by "yes" or "no." The answers have been previously written on the slips or cards with a solution of tannin. The medium has the sitter write with ink, and himself proceeds to dry the ink with a blotter. The blotter has

been previously moistened with a solution of sulphate or tincture of iron. This brings out the answer in black letters. This trick may be varied by having the sitter put his card or slip into an envelope, the inside of which has been moistened with the iron solution.

You can produce "spirit" writing upon a common breakfast plate by having the writing previously done with a solution of paraffine or the white of an egg, and allowed to dry. When the medium wishes the writing to appear, he breathes upon the back of the plate and wipes it carefully with a handkerchief. Then the other side is similarly treated. Ostensibly this is done to make sure that the plate is perfectly clean, but in reality it is to slightly dampen the writing so that the colored powder will adhere to it. Then a little snuff, lampblack, or any powdered material that has a color, is dusted over it, the loose powder blown or shaken off, and there is the mysterious writing plainly visible.

Writing may also be done with a diluted solution of tincture of iron, which will be invisible. Pressing upon it a blotter dampened with strong tea will bring it out in black.

DEVELOPMENT, A SOURCE OF REVENUE.

One of the most prolific sources of revenue for the dishonest medium is the "development" scheme. Everywhere they go they find many persons who are easily persuaded to believe that they possess mediumistic gifts of a high order. In case some other medium has already told the person this—and it is rarely you can find one who has not been told so by nearly all the mediums he has consulted—it is not hard to convince him that by proper "development" he can acquire wonderful powers as a psychic. If the medium is simply an ordinary clairvoyant, the fees for development are not very high, and the development is usually a success. As a matter of fact, almost every person is more or less clairvoyant, and needs only a little instruction as to mode of sitting for it, to bring out the faculty and render it useful to them. Thousands are developed in this phase without any instruction whatever, simply sitting in their own homes. However, a little instruction by an honest, competent medium is often beneficial in enabling one to develop his latent powers in this direction more quickly and with greater safety than it otherwise might be done. For, be it known

there are grave dangers lurking in the path of the one who seeks to develop these powers. There are many mental and physical wrecks strewn along the pathway of occult science, and we cannot too strongly urge those who seek unfoldment to exercise caution as to the character of mediums with whom they may sit and of persons who sit with them. There may be grave danger, too, in allowing miscellaneous influences to control your mentality. Remain in control of your own mind by all means. †

The dishonest phenomenal medium is the one who gets the cream of the fees for development. Naturally nearly every one who witnesses phenomenal manifestations, and believes in them, is desirous of developing the power to produce like results, and this feeling is encouraged by the medium, who assures him he has the power, and it can be quickly developed by the medium's "guides." Consequently he is induced to take development sittings, which cost him from 50 cents to \$5 per sitting, according to his anxiety and ability to pay. If, after a time, the sitter begins to get discouraged, he gets a little stimulus in the way of a word or two, or a few scratches, on his slate (if he is sitting for slate-writing), or some manifestation (easily produced by the medium) which he is assured came through his own mediumship. Thus he is kept on the string until he quits in disgust, or until the medium leaves town. And he is no nearer being a phenomenal medium than when he commenced, *unless* the medium discovers that he is "safe," in which case, for a good stiff price, cash in hand, he will be instructed in the business—developed at once—and started on the road to fame and fortune. Some slate-writing mediums reap a harvest by selling "magnetized" slates to their dupes, and these are to-day extensively advertised in most all of the Spiritualist papers. Some sell "magnetized paper" to assist development. Others have been known to sell packages of graveyard dirt for this purpose, and nearly all have some device or other to sell, more especially to those who take development by mail. One woman has done a good business for years in this way. She sells memberships in a "National Developing Circle," \$1 being the fee. For this you get a certificate of membership, passwords, etc., but a further expenditure of from \$1 up is necessary, for magnetized paper, slates, etc., to make the development certain. Where ignorance is bliss, perhaps 'twere folly to be wise.

In some cases the medium holds developing circles at so much per head, and has all that can be accommodated. If honest the medium can usually turn out several fair mediums, and will do no particular damage to the rest, as they will usually get some good instruction and advice. But the circles held for this purpose by the average phenomenal medium do more harm than good, usually, for they are not conducted with an honest purpose, and no honest medium is or ever has been turned out by them, that we ever heard of.

Beware of the fakir who advertises charms, talismans, magic belts, etc. This is often done by alleged mediums, and is always part of the stock in trade of the wonder-working, fortune-telling variety of mediums, who, strange to say, find many customers among those who call themselves Spiritualists. Any sympathy given to victims of such swindlers is worse than wasted.

The daily papers frequently chronicle the arrest or flight of some alleged medium who has flimflammed some confiding believer out of his money. Too often the guilty one has previously enjoyed the confidence of Spiritualists, and been endorsed by them. And if the truth were known as to the number of people who have been defrauded by such mediums, it would astonish you. Many who have been defrauded pocket their loss and say nothing about it, not wishing to have it known that they were so weak as to be taken in by such a transparent swindle. This trait of human nature is counted on by these mediums, and encourages them to take more chances than they otherwise would. It is only now and then that a victim "squeals" and resorts to the law.

PLAYED FOR A SUCKER.

This peculiarity of mankind, an unwillingness to let it be known that they have been successfully "played for suckers," explains the backwardness of many Spiritualists to-day in taking up the fraud question. It certainly does take same moral courage for persons to acknowledge that they have been for months or years firm believers and supporters of persons now proven to be flagrant swindlers and frauds. That is exactly the position of thousands of Spiritualists to-day, and the time is not far distant when they will be compelled to acknowledge it. The longer they persist in dodging the inevitable, the greater will be their humiliation at the outcome.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS—DARK CIRCLES.

The great fact to be kept in mind in investigating as to the reliability of spiritual manifestations—so-called—is this that nearly all the work is done by confederates, especially in materializing and all dark seance work. In every circle there are one or more, either among the audience, or concealed about the premises, and ready to assist the medium. You may say in regard to certain occasions, "Oh I knew all present, and none of them could have been confederates. They were friends of mine and good people." We are sorry to shake anyone's faith in human nature, but we state facts, not guesswork. In every circle there are those who will assist the medium in his fake work, more or less. Some do it in return for being admitted free, or if they pay, having their money returned to them. Some help for the sake of the "cause," strange as it may appear. And some are paid for it.

STARTLING LUMINOUS NAMES.

A new appliance for producing luminous names, emblems, etc., in dark circles has been devised recently. The names and words flash out in the air, apparently, in the most brilliant manner, like a flash of lightning, and invariably produce a sensation. The matter to be exhibited, whether names or emblems, is cut out of tin foil and pasted on a sheet of clear glass, care being taken to connect each letter with the next. When all is ready a wire from a powerful battery is connected with the beginning and terminal of the tin foil, and a brilliant flash will light up all the lines for an instant. The battery may be concealed in a distant place, and two fine wires in the seance room could be easily concealed. Many of our readers have seen the same thing done by lecturers on electricity, who produce on a piece of glass an imitation of a flash of lightning. It is done in exactly the same manner. In these days of electricity, when such wonderful effects can be produced with it, it is not safe nor wise to ascribe to spiritual agency anything in the line of alleged phenomena that has not been conclusively proven to be such.

Too many Spiritualists are inclined to trust implicitly in everything they get from the spirit side of life. Even if there be no doubt that the information came from there, it should be carefully considered before being accepted as reliable. Any of us would consider it the height of foolishness to go out upon the street and consult the first stranger we met as to what we should do concerning an important busi-

ness matter, or even our every-day life. Yet thousands of Spiritualists are doing worse every day, and even paying for such information. They go to mediums, and blindly accept what is told them, and act upon it, when they have not the least guarantee or proof that the intelligence from whom the advice came knows any more about it than they do. They seem to take it for granted that when a spirit gets on the other side it is immediately endowed with superior wisdom and unlimited power. On the contrary, the best evidence we have teaches that each soul enters the next life just as it left this—no wiser, no better. Also that all knowledge over there must be acquired the same as here, and it is, as here, a task that requires time—years upon years.

Another great mistake of many Spiritualists is the idea they seem to have that mediumship carries with it a guarantee of morality, whereas such is not the case by any means. Mediumship is a faculty possessed in a greater or less degree by everybody, and has nothing to do with the moral character. Thus we have among some of our best psychics some rascals, and some who are total wrecks both morally and physically, the victims of pernicious habits. Many of them are totally unreliable. The percentage of morality, so far as we have observed, is no greater among mediums than among a like number of orthodox or any other class of people. The spiritual mediums who are strictly honest and live the life that Spiritualism teaches us should be lived, are worthy of being trusted, and should be encouraged and taken care of by Spiritualists for the sake of the good they can do in their work. Their task is to demonstrate the fact that there is a hereafter, and that our departed friends can and do return to give us comfort and aid in our wearisome journey through life, to comfort the sorrowing and bless and benefit all humanity by the power which has been given them for that purpose. But do not trust and make a little god out of every man or woman you meet who "has jerks and sees things." If you do you will get beautifully left. Many, many good Spiritualists have been parted from their hard-earned wealth by trusting too much to some one who happened to be able to give them what they thought was a good test.

Whenever a medium, or supposed medium, suggests to you the advisability of buying any charm, magnetized belt, talisman, magnetized paper or slates, or anything of the sort,

right then is a good time to tear yourself away from their presence and put their names down in your fake book. They are after your money, and will get it sooner or later, if you stay with them.

No honest medium will engage in the sale of lucky charms, magnetized slates or paper, talismans, magic mirrors, or anything of the kind. Nor will they advertise to tell fortunes by cards, reunite the separated, find hidden treasure, show you your future husband or wife, furnish spirit photographs, give pointers on stocks, or do anything of that nature.

When the treasury officials of our government discover that a new counterfeit of our currency is in existence, they give the fact the utmost publicity and endeavor to inform the public, as thoroughly as possible, how to detect the counterfeit. And when a new swindle is sprung upon the community a like course is pursued in order that the public may be able to avoid loss by being caught in the meshes of the sharpers. The way the game is worked is thoroughly described in the public press and the game is effectually blocked, excepting that now and then some one who never reads the papers is caught and skinned. Spiritualists generally admit that fraud is practiced in the name of Spiritualism, that thousands are victimized every year, and the cause is injured and disgraced by these people. Yet, when you talk of showing them up, in order that the people may avoid being caught by them, a storm is at once raised, and we are told that any one who teaches the public how these tricks are done is as guilty as the frauds themselves, and should be in prison. We are even told by persons high in the councils of the movement that "it will not benefit Spiritualism to expose these things, that the people should be allowed to take care of themselves." In conversation with various prominent mediums, who are generally supposed to be honest, the writer of this was told by each, in substance, that "each of us will have enough to do to attend to his own affairs." That "we should let the people find out for themselves about the fraud work." "That the evil will right itself in time," etc. Now, we make this assertion, and are prepared to back it up, that no honest medium will view the matter in that light or object to the thorough exposure of fraud. No honest medium can have anything to fear from such exposure. The talk about the fraud agitation being calculated to injure honest mediums is all rot, and is put forth by the fake ele-

ment in opposition to the movement. It is surprising that intelligent people will listen to such an argument for a moment. We tell you in all sincerity, the fraud element in Spiritualism is doomed, and the end is not far distant. Mediums who hope to remain and work with the movement must cleanse themselves of every taint of dishonesty, and cease to stand by and defend the wrong.

The deception practiced in fake materializing and dark circles is but one of the objections to them, and the least. If the public could but know all in regard to this class of meetings there would be a storm of indignation that would close them up for good and all. Not all are very bad, or even anything more than petty swindles. But there have been some in the past, in both the east and the west, that were disgraceful. Not only were credulous and confiding dupes swindled out of large sums of money, but much worse things occurred under cover of darkness and seclusion of these places. They should be stamped out at once and forever. We refer to those conducted by professional so-called mediums, who hold seances with promiscuous audiences and charge an admission fee. No good ever came out of these, and none ever will. Scientific investigation of these matters, properly conducted, is another matter, and should be encouraged. But, down with the fake!

We are told by some of the opponents of fraud exposure that the time for exposure is when the fraud is committed, and not in public print. That would be all right if it were practicable. Unfortunately it is not. All seances are now so well protected by tools of the medium that nothing can be done. And in public meetings it is likewise an impossibility, for any demonstration would be followed by arrest for disturbing a public meeting. The same result would be liable to follow any disturbance at a seance. No matter how great a fake, the parties claim protection under the law covering religious or public meetings.

WHY NOT GIVE THE NAMES OF THE MEDIUMS?

We have been asked, "Why do you not give the names of the mediums who practice this nefarious work? Are you afraid to?" We think no one who knows the author will accuse him of being afraid to denounce any false medium by name, and publicly. We have done this many times, and still live, although some of our good friends in the Spiritual-

istic ranks have expressed the conviction that the spirit world would soon "remove" us for our "work against mediumship." We are still here and very much alive.

There are various good reasons why we do not mention names of crooked mediums in this book. One is because a full list of those who are fattening off the Spiritualists would require many more pages than we are limited to in this edition, as it would be manifestly unfair to mention the names of any, unless all are included. It would be much easier for us to give the names of those who are known and proved to be true and reliable. Their names would occupy but few pages. We are speaking now, remember, of "professional" mediums only.

Another reason is that it would be unfair also to mention the crooked mediums by name unless we also gave the names of their assistants, and of the local societies that employ them, knowing them to be such. This would swell the list to very large proportions. We have no desire to injure any of these people, and when they give up the practice of fraudulent work, no one will be more willing to give them the glad hand than the writer.

RALLYING AROUND FRAUDULENT MEDIUMS.

Then again, the mention of these peoples' names gives their work a certain amount of advertising. There is a large percentage of the Spiritualists—the credulous class—who, when they see a medium denounced, will rally around him and patronize him the more, under the impression that he is being "persecuted." These people are of those who whenever they see any alleged manifestation that they cannot account for otherwise, ascribe it to the agency of spirits. They will even insist that Herrmann and all other "magicians" are mediums and have spirit aid in their work. Of course we do not hope to be able to convince such people that they are being humbugged, but are willing to try.

At any time that it will serve any good and useful purpose, we shall be willing to give the names of such mediums as we know to be engaged in crooked work, in any special line mentioned herein.

NOTES FOR REFLECTION.

It is hoped that nothing in these pages will be construed into a reflection upon the character or work of those me-

dioms who are true and honest. There are many such, we are glad to say—good, noble men and women, who would scorn to stoop to an act of dishonesty or deception—and they are worthy of all honor and respect, and should have the support and encouragement of all true Spiritualists. We should say, rather, of all Spiritualists. The word itself, in its true meaning, comprises all that there is of truth and honesty. No person who is guilty of fraud in any shape, or knowingly excuses and defends the perpetrators of it, is a Spiritualist. Therefore we say all Spiritualists should rally around the honest mediums, when they prove themselves to be such, and give them their protection and loving support. In no other way can we be sure of good, reliable work on their part. Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and hence, if a medium who has entered upon the work for the angel world, even in the best of faith, or with the best intentions, finds herself, through the indifference of patrons or by reason of the superior attractions offered by mediums of the other class, in financial straits, the temptation to fake “just a little” and endeavor to relieve the monetary stringency is almost irresistible. In fact we have known many such cases. The first step in this course is usually the hardest. If it is successful and gives the popularity of the medium an upward impetus, the next step is easier, and ere she knows it the once true and honest “mouth-piece of the angel world” is a full-fledged fake, is recognized and assisted as such by the “fraternity,” and it is then too late to go back. Once in the meshes of fraud there is little chance of escape. The club of intimidation is held over her, and she must uphold all of the fraternity as honest, and even assist them in their work of deception personally, or her business will be ruined by the most effective methods of boycott and slander. If perchance the poor victim should be moved by her good influences, as they often are, to speak out and denounce the fraudulent work, not only is all the torturing and boycotting machinery of the combination put into operation, even in many cases, to the extent of personal violence, but the alleged Spiritualists themselves, many of them, will turn from her as a “renegade fake” and insist that because she has been dishonest, her word now counts for nothing. Others will say that she is “obsessed by Jesuitical spirits” who are trying to discredit Spiritualism and down all mediums. At any rate, her confessions are entirely discredited, the mass

of Spiritualists turn from her, and there is nothing left for the poor medium to do but return to her fraudulent work, study up on the subject, and endeavor, if possible, to produce something more sensational and "drawing" than the rest. If shrewd and "nervy" she generally succeeds, becomes hardened to the work, the "good influences" forsake her, and she becomes a chronic fraud, deserted at the last by the fawning "phenomena chasers" who led her on, and finally dying in obscurity, in pain and want, to be laid away at the end by the hand of charity.

THE DOWNWARD COURSE PORTRAYED.

There is another class that may be mentioned in this connection. There are some who are attracted by the spiritual phenomena, so-called, and become earnest investigators. They eagerly sit for development and are ambitious to become mediums. They think it must be grand to hear and see the spirits, and they are encouraged by the mediums who are getting their money to persevere, and given the assurance, perhaps, that they will have some physical phase. Finally they begin to "see things and jerk." They jump to the conclusion that because they are thus influenced and can give a "test" occasionally they are full-fledged mediums, and it is only necessary to enter into the work and success will be theirs. They hang out a sign, perhaps give up other and remunerative employment, at the advice of some alleged "guide" or control, and then trouble begins. The new medium soon discovers that spirit influences and tests are not always on tap and ready to be served up at the behest of every one who calls himself a "seer" or "psychic." Sitters are not satisfied and come not again. The cash comes in with painful slowness, and cheaper rooms become necessary, then starvation threatens, and the medium is in the depths of despondency. He sees "Professor" So-and So raking in the dollars from numerous sittings and crowded circles, in his palatial apartments up street. He knows the Professor is a fake, and wonders why honesty is not rewarded at least as well as rascality. Fintly the tempter comes along and whispers: "What's the use of moping here and starving? You can do as well as he. The people are aching to be humbugged. Play your cards right and you can live in luxury and be a little god among the credulous Spiritualists. You are a chump to sit here and starve when fortune is yours

for the taking. Get a hustle on you!" The medium begins to think. He hustles around and soon gets "on" to some of the tricks. At his next circle or sitting he tries one on, and it takes beautifully. He soon develops into a slate-writer, or trumpet medium, or perhaps, if he is ambitious, tries materialization, and makes a success of it. Thenceforth his path is one of ruses—for awhile. If he is shrewd and has a good address and winning ways about him he is fairly worshiped by the mass of Spiritualists in his locality, and gets plenty of gratuitous advertising. He has elegant apartments up town and his bank account swells rapidly. He may strike a "snag" occasionally and have his work exposed. But that is nothing. The old-time Spiritualists know he is all right, and that the exposure is only a job put up by "fraud-hunters" to injure mediumship. He goes right along with his work, and frequently has more patronage than ever. The career of such people seems alluring and their paths full of roses, but after a few years the end comes, and what is it? Look in the columns of some of our journals and note the appeals for help for some poor old medium who is eking out his or her last days in poverty and pain. Trace back the careers of most of these and you will find that they were "wonderful phenomenal mediums" in their day. Go to some of the almshouses, asylums and sanitariums of the land and you will find there the poverty-stricken and pain-racked remnants of persons who were once the pampered idols of those to whom a "test" or a physical manifestation was an evidence of divine power in the medium. And the fate of those people will be that of those who are to-day pursuing the same course. The "wages of sin is death," and if it is not a Simon-pure brand of sin to personate our loved spirit friends, to sign their names to forged communications, to give false messages purporting to come from them, and to otherwise insult the intelligence and outrage the tenderest feelings of the human heart, in God's name where will you find it? The statements made above are matters of fact. Look them up for yourself.

HOW TO DO AWAY WITH FAKES.

For reasons given in these pages, the writer as well as very many of our most prominent speakers and teachers are opposed to the commercial feature of mediumship—to making it an article of merchandise. It cannot be successfully

denied that this commercial or money-getting feature is responsible for the abuses and dishonesty that are practiced in the name of Spiritualism. Do away with this feature, place the honest mediums beyond the reach of want, relieve them of the necessity of hustling for their daily bread and monthly rent dues, care for them tenderly and shield them from the evil influences of promiscuous crowds, and you will finally do away with the fakes, by closing the source from which they draw the bulk of their recruits.

ALWAYS USE YOUR REASONING FACULTIES.

To accomplish this will require time, a long time, and an earnest effort on the part of the friends of truth and honesty. Spiritualists must learn to discriminate between the true and the false, and get rid of the silly notion, the teaching of which has been the aim of fake mediums ever since the first fake seance given in the land, that when you enter a seance-room or seek for a private sitting you must close the eyes and ears of your reason and accept whatever comes as the genuine stuff; that if you attempt any test as to the genuineness of the manifestations, "you have fraud in your heart, and will get fraud in return." That you must judge only by your "spiritual understanding," and so on, ad nauseam. If a manifestation will not stand the test of reason and common sense; if you cannot be absolutely sure that it is not the work of the medium or his confederates, or both, of what value is it as a proof of the proposition that there is a future life? It does not prove it, and further, not one in a thousand of the so-called "proofs of immortality" supplied by these seances and circles are of the least value as proofs of that proposition to a sensible, thinking person. It is a matter for congratulation to earnest, intelligent Spiritualists that we have the proof of the continuity of life, even if it is often buried under such a mass of unsavory rubbish.

One great difficulty in the way of purging Spiritualism of fraud is the persistence with which prominent workers in our cause shield and defend those who are known to be doing fraudulent work. Instance in point: Among the speakers at a western camp-meeting last fall (1902) was one of our most prominent lecturers, an intelligent and eloquent speaker and leader. At the city where the camp was held was an alleged Spiritualist society, and this society was running the camp. This same society had among its star attractions an alleged

medium who had, time and again, been detected in doing fraudulent work upon the platform and elsewhere, but was still upheld by the society on account of her "drawing" powers. The facts in the case were presented to the speaker above mentioned and vouched for by many of the leading Spiritualists of the city, people whose reliability and intelligence could not be questioned. In the face of this, the eloquent speaker and leader took occasion to cordially and heartily endorse the accused alleged medium in his next discourse, after stating that many had approached him with certain charges against her. It is obvious that the honorable speaker, "Rev." as he is called, is looking out for his job and his own welfare with loving solicitude, and cannot be induced to condemn the work of any medium who is to any extent popular, whether said popularity is deserved or not.

The same spirit of caution is manifested by other prominent workers who, when pressed for an opinion as to the propriety or advisability of exposing fraudulent mediums, admit that it should be done, but invariably insist that caution should be used, that we should "first be sure that the medium is a fraud." Those who talk this way are in every case presenting test work in connection with their oratory, either by themselves or partners. As test work is the most difficult of all phases to verify to a certainty, the workers in this line are reasonably safe in agreeing that fraud should be exposed, and cautious enough to insist upon absolute proof in their own cases, which they know is difficult to obtain. Put the same question to a physical medium—a slate-writer, trumpet, materializing, dark circle or other sort—and what reply do you get? Simply this: "Let the frauds alone. It is none of your business. Even if some do fraud work, it is a benefit to the cause, as it catches the investigators and makes converts of them. Without the phenomena we cannot get converts," etc.

The writer of this recently asked the above question of one of the oldest ballot-test mediums in the country, if not in the world, and received this reply: "It is an insult to mediums to suggest such a question. We, all of us, have enough to do to attend to our own business. Let the fraudulent ones alone, and they will die out eventually. No, sir, it is an arrogant assumption for any one to question a medium's work."

The writer confesses that the reply was a surprise to him, as he had previously great faith in this woman's mediumship. That same evening he attended the lady's meeting in a public hall, taking a front seat. To his disappointment, she refused to read any of the large number of ballots deposited upon the table in front of her, giving only her regular lecture and a few off-hand tests. It is worthy of mention that this medium, who is quite aged and requires glasses to read with, claims to get answers from ballots clairaudiently, and yet always puts on her glasses when manipulating the ballots. Why is this thus? If the material eyes of the medium are not necessary in seeing clairvoyantly, why are the glasses used?

SOME MISCELLANEOUS TRICKS.

A new process for obtaining full names of sitters, names of spirit friends, and other particulars, has recently been discovered. By this method detection is almost absolutely impossible, unless the sitter knows the trick. Take two ounces paraffine wax, melt in a water-bath, and add a little vaseline—just enough to slightly color the wax. Stir this in thoroughly, and then as the wax cools, knead it as you would dough until cool. Make into a flat cake. When preparing for a sitter or circle, take a large letter tablet of calendered or glazed paper. For a private sitting a small tablet is better. Rub the under side of the third or fourth sheet from the top with the cake of paraffine, so that a very thin coating of wax covers it evenly. This is all the preparation needed, except that in an adjoining room, or behind a screen, you must have a little lamp-black or powdered charcoal ready. In a circle, produce the prepared tablet and request each one to write the name of a spirit friend he wishes to hear from, also his or her own name. Explain that this is done in order to concentrate your mind on the spirit and draw it to the circle. The medium turns his back or leaves the room while this is being done, and does not see any of the writing. Suspicious persons may examine the tablet, but no carbon paper or anything wrong can be found. When all have written the names some skeptic in the audience is asked to tear off the written sheet and keep it carefully in his pocket. The medium or an assistant then takes charge of the tablet and conveys it carelessly to another room, or behind a screen, removes the paraffined sheet, sprinkles the

sheet below it with the black powder, and there is all the writing duplicated as plainly as it appears on the written sheet. From this the medium is supplied with the names and particulars and a very interesting and convincing seance follows. If the medium is a slate writer he has here everything necessary in the way of information, and can fix up his slates in a few minutes. It is a wonderful test to the audience, as they know the written sheet is safely reposing in the pocket of one of their number and the manifestations must surely be genuine. They can be accounted for in no other way.

NUMBERS ON WATCHES, AND OTHER ARTICLES.

Another very effective test used by some mediums in an audience or circle is that of giving the numbers on the watches of various persons in the room. This looks very mysterious, but is a simple trick. The medium generally has several confederates in the audience, and is supplied with the numbers of their watches, and perhaps with the numbers of one or two bank notes which he has given them for that purpose. He sandwiches these in with his other tests to the astonishment of the uninitiated. Sometimes he will manage to secure from jewelers the numbers of watches owned by a few of the most prominent men who usually attend these meetings, and who cannot be suspected of being in league with them. When any of these are present he gives them the numbers of their watches, and thus makes a big hit. One medium we know improved on this by having a confederate go to one of these prominent men and getting him to change a ten dollar bill, having first made a note of the number. In the course of the evening, in giving this man a test, he saw in the air above the man's head, a ten dollar bill with such a number, and told him so, asking him if he did not have such a bill in his pocket. To his great surprise the man found the medium was right, and made a graceful acknowledgment of the fact. All these tricks are very simple—if you know how they are done.

PARAFFINE MOULDS OF SPIRIT HANDS.

Much ado has been made over paraffine moulds of spirit hands and faces produced through the alleged mediumship of certain persons. A pan of water with melted paraffine wax in it is placed in front of or near the cabinet in a mate-

rializing seance. A form comes out and dips its face repeatedly in the pan, the supposition being that each dip deposits a coating of wax on the face. When the deposit is heavy enough the spirit pulls the paraffine mask from its face, and a plaster mould may afterward be made from it. The same way with hands. For the face mask, and generally for the hands, the wax masks are prepared in advance and secreted upon the medium's person. They can be made from any of the toy masks sold in the stores. Thus they do not resemble the medium's face, and the natural inference is that they are faces of the spirits. The hand moulds can be made from any one's hands, care being taken to have the size and shape correspond to that of the form supposed to produce them. †

HOW TO DETECT FRAUD.

To write this chapter is the hardest job in the whole book, for experience has enabled the class of mediums we have described to throw so many safeguards around their work and protect themselves so thoroughly from exposure that it would take skilled detectives with a strong force of officers to catch some of them in the act, especially the skilled professionals in the materializing line. They always have a strong bodyguard, composed, first, of credulous Spiritualists (so-called); secondly, of their own paid assistants. † And the seance-rooms are generally so arranged that at the least alarm all evidence of fakery can be hustled out of the way, in the shortest possible time, while the bodyguard engages the grabbers. The traveling and less pretentious class of mediums depend more upon the exclusion of suspicious and obnoxious persons by refusing to admit any who are not known to them or properly vouched for. They generally have their own crowd of worshiping votaries who are so attracted by the manifestations, and have such faith in the medium, that they attend as often as their means will permit. The only sure way to detect them is to seize the form before it can disappear in the cabinet, and while it is clad in its disguise. The most satisfactory method of proving the genuineness of the medium's work is to have him or her come to your own house, or to one that you know is not "fixed." Have a wooden cabinet or strong wire cage made, under your own direction, that can be securely locked. Then have the medium thoroughly searched and locked in the cabinet, and prevent any person who can possibly act as

an assistant from going near the cabinet. Under these conditions if any forms come out into the room, outside the cabinet, you having locked and sealed it, and holding the keys yourself, you can be tolerably sure you have a genuine case of materialization.

TRUMPET SEANCES.

In trumpet seances in the dark it is no test to hold the medium's hands. There are always others in the circle who will manipulate the trumpet, and do the talking. And there is no test in any names or messages given out, for mediums are always supplied with such material. The only way to be sure is to make it impossible for the medium or any one else to touch the trumpet, and this is difficult unless you have your own exclusive circle, and can depend on every member. Be sure that the medium has no second trumpet concealed about his or her clothing. Trumpets are made in telescopic form for this purpose. In such case, however, you can get no medium to work. They must have a certain number of their own crowd, to form a "battery."

In slate-writing it is easy to be sure of the genuine if you keep your wits about you. But it is absolutely necessary for the success of this experiment that you should bring your own slates. Be sure they are clean, and not let them leave your hands for even a second. Only in this way can you be sure of a genuine slate-writing.

For all kinds of dark circles you can only proceed in the manner given for trumpet circles, with any hope of success.

A WORD OF WARNING.

The author feels that he cannot too strongly emphasize the warning, given in another place, against wasting your time and money in taking sittings with mediums for the development of physical phases of mediumship. Some mediums make this feature a prominent part of their work, and nearly every one with whom they come in contact is informed that "the guides" will develop them in one or more of these desirable phases if they will sit for it with this particular medium. It is the worst sort of folly, and can only result in disappointment. We have never yet found a well-authenticated case where development in this line was successful. Of course the mediums—nearly all—say they were developed in that way, but if you could know the facts you would find they "developed" their slate-writing, materializa-

tion, or whatever it was, by learning how it was done, and practicing until they became expert. You can "develop" in the same way if you have the price, which is generally a good round one. One medium for slate-writing who gives developing sittings at \$3 each, uses a pair of large horseshoe magnets, and requires the sitter to place his feet upon the two poles of one magnet, while he holds the two poles of the other magnet in his hands. An hour of this twice a week, and a few magnetic passes over his head, is all the victim gets for his money. The "development"—the actual independent slate-writing—is always coming, is "just a few weeks" ahead, but never gets there. The writer knows one lady who has been sitting, by advice of a medium, for materialization for seventeen years, and is still at it, with no prospect of success. She has all along been earnest and confident that it would come in time, and is now ruined in health and almost an imbecile. As long as she had means she poured it into the mediums' coffers, and after that was exhausted continued her sittings alone, isolating herself from her fellow-creatures and wearing herself out in solitude. This is only one of many such pitiful cases of lives ruined and prospects blighted through the devilish greed of conscienceless swindlers. It is not enough for them to insult and rob the sorrowing and bereaved by selling them false and lying messages purporting to come from their loved ones who have gone into the other life, but they seek to despoil them of what means they have left, and even of their reason, by promising to endow them with powers that the rascals know full well cannot be conferred.

THE FAMOUS BALLOT TESTS.

Regarding ballot tests, so-called, given in circles and public meetings, it is almost impossible to detect fraudulent work and expose the process successfully, as the medium always has the "conditions" arranged so as to defeat any attempt in that direction. The only way, practically, to be sure of genuineness is to impose conditions that will render deception impossible. And right here comes another difficulty: No fake medium will submit to any such conditions. It clashes with their "dignity." Therefore, all we can do is to demand such conditions, and if they are refused we can form our own conclusions. For instance: Suppose the medium does his work with a bandage over his eyes, as some do, thus conveying the impression that he is in reality blind-

folded. Provide a regular and sure enough hoodwink, such as is used by some secret societies in their initiations. This has a pad of lamb's wool which fits over each eye, rendering it impossible for the person to open his eyes or see anything with the material vision. Then, if the hoodwink is properly adjusted, he cannot look down and read the ballots as he opens them before placing them to his forehead and pretending to read them by spirit power. Any one who will take the trouble to examine the ballots usually sent to the platform to be read will discover that many of them are very carelessly folded, being doubled only once, and it is no trouble at all for the medium to open and read them without being observed as he sits at the table and fumbles them over with his fingers. The handkerchief usually placed over the eyes is really only a sham hoodwink, as it allows a clear vision of anything held at a certain distance below the level of the eyes. Of course the bandage could be so adjusted that it would be difficult to see anything at any angle, but the medium sees to it that it is adjusted to suit his purposes.

Where the medium is not blindfolded a different precaution is necessary to prevent deception. The best way would be to have the ballots all placed in sealed envelopes. But this is objected to, as it is alleged that while such ballots could be successfully read, the process "exhausts" the "power" too quickly, and good results could not be obtained. Then suppose we do not seal them, but simply fold them in such a way that the ends can be tucked in—or any old way, just so the medium cannot open them too easily. Or even put them in envelopes without sealing. This would be a reasonably sure method of prevention provided a close watch were placed on every movement of the medium's fingers. Some of them are deucedly clever. But even with these precautions some mediums could score an apparent success, and in this way: Every professional medium who has been long in any one locality has a certain number of followers or regular sitters who attend nearly all his meetings and circles. He knows them, knows the names and particulars regarding their deceased friends and relatives, and can nearly always guess to a certainty what names and questions will be in their ballots—so that without opening a single ballot, or even touching one, he can usually give a large number of "tests" that will be correct, and recognized as such. In case the medium is a stranger and cannot depend upon this, he will have a number of confederates send up ballots pre-

pared under his direction and so marked that he can distinguish them. So you see that after all the problem of how to circumvent these tricksters is an intricate one.

The writer recently heard a ballot-test medium, "pastor" of a "Spiritualist church," assert in his meeting that all those who propose to put mediums under test conditions of any kind are themselves dishonest, full of deception, and not at all spiritually-minded. And yet this same pastor, at the same meeting, gave so-called ballot tests under what he claims are test conditions—a pretense at blindfolding, as heretofore described. With all due respect to the "reverend" gentleman, we want to say right here that there are very many Spiritualists in the land—more perhaps than he is aware of—and their number is growing rapidly, who have found so much fraud without seeking it, that they will hereafter demand reasonable and just test conditions from all alleged mediums before endorsing or supporting them. These people are as honest, intelligent and spiritual-minded as can be found. They know the truth of Spiritualism, and it is to them a religion and a consolation beyond price. They value as a sacred boon any token of love or communication from the loved ones on the other side that bears the stamp of truth. But they have discovered so much rottenness, flagrant deception and fraud among the so-called Spiritualist societies and mediums—so much sacrifice of truth and principle for the sake of the almighty dollar, that they are pretty thoroughly disgusted with the movement as at present managed. They see prominent Spiritualist societies employing, endorsing and upholding so-called mediums who have been repeatedly exposed in their nefarious practices. Notorious frauds in the phenomenal line are countenanced at some of the camp meetings, and even advertised and endorsed by them, against the vigorous protests of those who know the facts. And above all, they find among the leading workers and directors of the movement an apathy and unwillingness to interfere that is astounding, in the face of the truth as it is shown. It is in bad taste for a "minister of the gospel of Spiritualism" to make such an assertion as the one quoted above, and when the said "minister" is also posing as a phenomenal medium, it is a "dead give away" on him, so to speak.

ADVICE YOU SHOULD HEED.

Brethren and sisters, co-workers, true mediums and friends of truth everywhere, we ask you earnestly to receive this little book in the spirit in which it is written; **study it carefully**, and aid us in the work of bringing about **better conditions**. For the sake of humanity and the memory of the dear ones on the other side of life, let us do what we can and do it now. We have a hard task confronting us. The **fake combination** is a powerful one, and unscrupulous, and has the aid of many in our ranks who are prominent and regarded as **shining lights**. There is no **guesswork nor mistake** about the statements herein made. In fact this is but a small part of the actual truth. The rest of the story will be given as soon as our people are ready to receive it.

The author will be pleased to receive suggestions and statements of facts that can be verified, to use in future editions of this book that may be issued.

We will also answer all reasonable questions and make all necessary explanations of matters that may not be thoroughly understood, provided stamps are enclosed for return postage.

Furthermore, if an exact statement of the conditions under which alleged manifestations are given, that you want to know **"how it is done,"** we will tell you if we can. If not, we will frankly say so. For writing out the details of any of these tricks we are obliged to make a small charge, 50 cents, to pay for the time and labor. Our time is so fully occupied that this is imperative. In making such statements, be careful to **give only facts**. Do not tell us what you think or suppose, nor what someone else says. There are so many ways of doing these things that we cannot judge correctly unless all the conditions are accurately described. There are few of these manifestations that we cannot **"call down"** if this request is complied with.

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