

At The Edge Of The Unknown

William Marriott and Sir Hiram Maxim

London and New York:
C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1910

Part One:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 29
Number 171
March 1910

ON THE EDGE OF THE UNKNOWN.

IS SPIRITUALISM A FRAUD? A FULL INQUIRY INTO THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION IS NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY "PEARSON'S MAGAZINE"; AND THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATIONS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES, THE FIRST OF WHICH APPEARS IN THIS NUMBER.





Remarkable materialisation of three spirit-forms produced by Mr. Marriott, who is seen in the photograph, at a seance. This is an exact reproduction by normal means of one of the most extraordinary phenomena of Spiritualism. (See page 244.)

On the Edge of the Unknown.

Foreword to important new series of articles on the occult. Spiritualism—is it a fraud? A searching inquiry to be conducted by PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

Is Spiritualism a fraud? Are the spirit-rappings and the spirit-forms of the séance, the prophecies of the palmist and the clairvoyant, the visions of the trance mediums, genuine evidence of a spirit-world, or are they mere catchpenny tricks, engineered by charlatans to charm money from the pockets of the credulous?

These are questions which demand a satisfactory answer, and it is my intention to conduct such searching inquiries that the real truth may be exposed. I have therefore resolved to publish a series of articles in which Spiritualism will be put upon its trial, in order that readers of *Pearson's Magazine* may judge for themselves the pros and cons of this tremendously important subject. If Spiritualism is genuine, it ought to be a vital factor in the lives of us all: if false, then it and its high priests should be ruthlessly exposed, and believers in it disillusioned of a faith that is altogether vain.

I have been fortunate in securing the co-operation of Mr. William Marriott, who has made a life-long study of the occult. In his first article he gives a full insight into the methods by which mediums produce phenomena at séances: methods, be it noted, by which he himself is able to produce precisely similar results. His conclusion coincides with my own—that every séance at which physical “phenomena” occur is simply an exaggerated conjuring entertainment.

This opinion, I am well aware, runs directly counter to the studied conclusions of such distinguished investigators as Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Professor Alfred Russel Wallace—to mention only a few of those who have lent the weight of their reputation to the furtherance of Spiritualistic beliefs. Will they now come forward with absolutely unimpeachable evidence of genuine Spiritualistic phenomena? Will they allow us to investigate séances which in their judgment are above suspicion?

I am aware that all evidence against Spiritualism is and must be negative. But Mr. Marriott, in proving that twenty mediums—with whom he has sat—are fraudulent, deals a serious blow at the *bona fides* of the twenty-first—who is unknown to him: and in the absence of evidence in their favour, judgment must go by default.

I therefore earnestly ask those who have found grounds for conviction to give us an opportunity of investigating one single phenomenon that stands inexplicable and above suspicion of fraud. I wish our inquiry to be searching, but I wish it also to be just.

The séance is only one of the phases of the occult into which our inquiry will probe. Next month Mr. Marriott will deal with “spirit-writing”—a form of trickery to which many mediums have lately turned; and this will be followed by a searching exposure of the crystal-gazers and palmists who profess to open the book of the future—for a consideration. Hypnotism, telepathy, as practised by the professional thought-reader, the haunting of houses, prophetic dreams, will all come, later on, within the scope of our inquiry.

THE EDITOR.



A spirit-form similar to those which appear at seances, but produced by purely normal means. One of Mr. Marriott's most serious blows at Spiritualistic beliefs is his demonstration of the possibility of reproducing all the phenomena of the seance by trickery.

I.—THE REALITIES OF THE SÉANCE!

A Startling Account of Investigations in the Domain of Spiritualism—Important Evidence on the Methods of the Mediums—how their Phenomena are Produced.

By WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

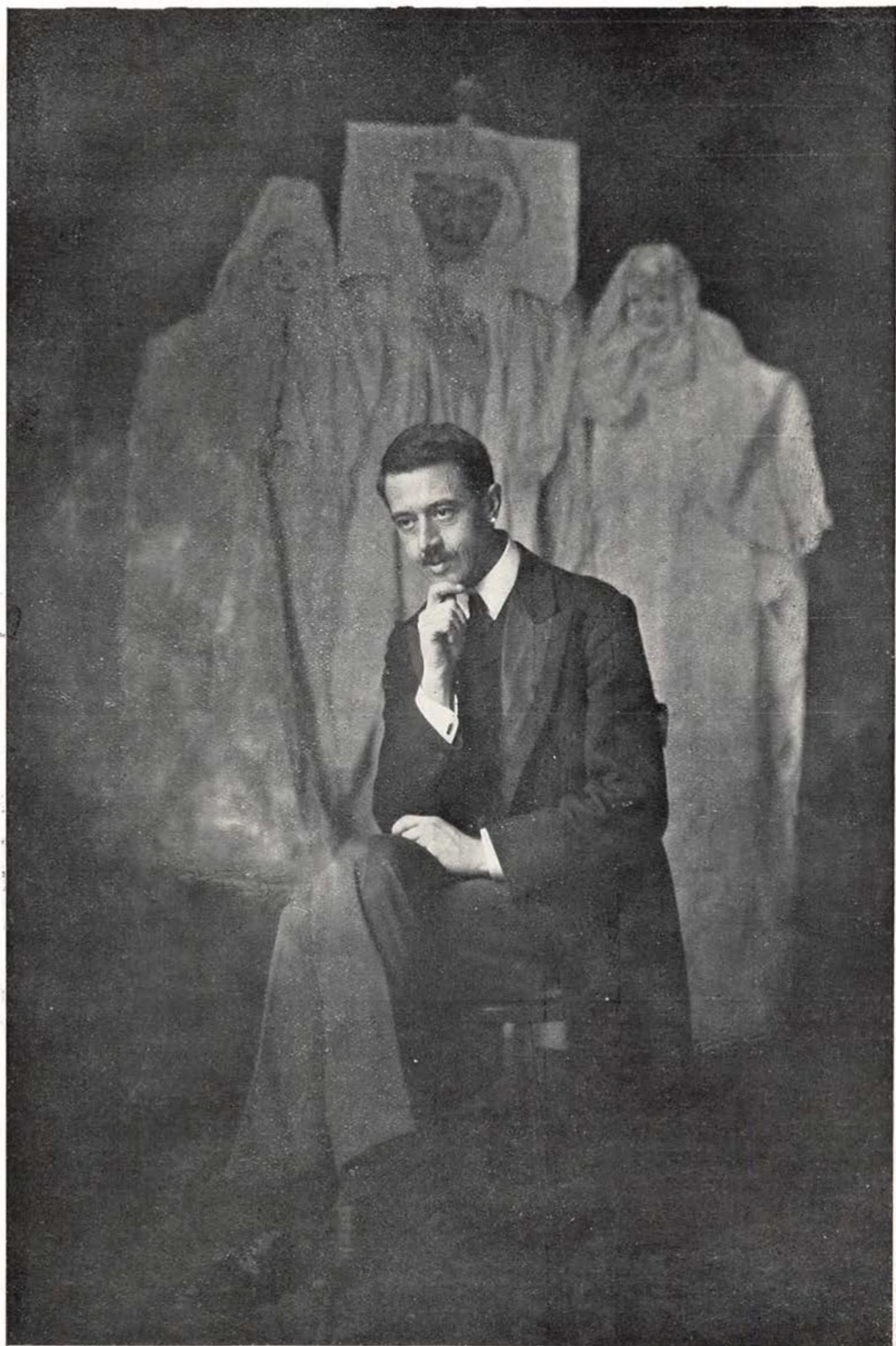
A PLUNGE INTO SPIRITUALISM.

THE séance is a good diving-board from which to take the plunge into a study of Spiritualism. The broad subject contains much that must always be a matter of blind faith or instinctive scepticism; many of its propositions are exceedingly difficult to believe, but absolutely impossible to prove or disprove. It is not so with the séance; there certain definite things are supposed to happen through a certain definite agency, and a definite answer to the question: "Do genuine spirit phenomena occur at séances?" must be forthcoming if sufficient time and care are expended on the collecting and weighing of evidence.

The importance of that adjudication is immense; and for this reason: fantastic, bizarre, and apparently ridiculous, the theory of the séance may seem, yet the fact remains

that a belief in the genuineness of some of the séance-phenomena is an essential part of Spiritualism. Many believers will admit—have been forced to admit—that fraud exists among mediums; none dare to agree that fraud is universal. The accepted phenomena need not be very wonderful. They vary from the materialisation of spirit forms down to trivial movements of chairs and tables without apparent physical contact. It is by miracles almost as trifling as the latter that some of the most distinguished converts to Spiritualism came into the fold; and I quite admit the logic of their conversion, if they were satisfied as to the genuineness even of such slight phenomena. It is all that I myself require to become a convinced Spiritualist; yet during all the years I have been seeking for a sign, none has been granted.

Instead, a hundred mediums have conjured



A photograph of three spirit figures such as are generally to be found materialising at seances; they are faintly luminous, and in a dark room are almost invariably recognised by the sitters present as departed friends or relatives. A remarkable companion photograph to this appears on the next page.



The spirit forms of the last photograph, seen in the cold light of day. These are part of the stock-in-trade of the materialising medium, and in a darkened room are easily mistaken for human—or rather superhuman—figures.

before me, filling me more and more with amazement at the credulity of human nature; and only the most accomplished of them giving a performance that would have mystified an intelligent child.

At many of the séances I was particularly struck by this fact. A very large proportion of the regular clientèle of the mediums was invariably composed, as one could judge by the questions asked, and by their sombre dress, of people who had recently suffered bereavement. It is on emotions and

affections that ought to be sacred that the mediums trade, holding out the hope of possible communication with the departed friend or relative. I believe that a great proportion of conversions to Spiritualism are traceable to undue influence used at times like these; and I am certain that this factor operates very largely to make the medium's profession as profitable as it often undoubtedly is; for, while the ordinary séance fee may be anything from half-a-crown to half-a-guinea, cases have come under my notice of mediums extorting considerable sums by foisting alleged messages from the other world on credulous people. In cases of this sort, of course, the mediums are bringing themselves well within reach of the arm of the law, but the cases where evidence is obtainable are unfortunately few.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A SÉANCE.

Many readers of this magazine will doubtless have attended spiritualistic séances themselves, but for the benefit of those who have not I will explain very

briefly what happens. A number of believers gather with the medium and form a circle, generally by joining hands. The medium is sometimes one of the circle, his hands being held by those on either side of him, or he may be sitting in a cabinet outside the circle. When all are seated, the lights are lowered or turned out, and after a time the phenomena begin. Voices are generally heard at first, addressing themselves to particular sitters. Then questions are asked by sitters, which are replied to either by the voices or by



Spirit hands—one of the most remarkable of seance phenomena. Hands and fingers, faintly luminous, appear in the darkened room, and seem to grasp at the medium who has been tightly bound in his chair. Further light is shed on this phenomenon by the photograph on the next page.



Apparatus by which the spirit hands are made to appear. The hands are merely dummies, either stuffed with sawdust, or, better still, inflated, and painted with luminous paint. Fixed on a framework they are passed to the medium by a confederate after he is bound.

a system of tapping and knocking, this having been the original manner in which spiritualistic manifestations occurred through the agency of the first mediums—the American Fox sisters, who founded modern Spiritualism nearly sixty years ago, but confessed late in life that their phenomena were all due to trickery. Frequently, too, the spirits signify their presence by the movement of heavy objects, such as chairs, tables, etc., without any apparent physical contact.

Then comes the chief marvel of the séance—the materialisation of spirit forms. They come either from the cabinet or from the place in the circle at which the medium is sitting. In the dim light it is generally possible to glean only a meagre idea of their appearance; nevertheless the spirit forms are

frequently, if not generally, recognised by sitters as those of departed friends or relatives. And it can readily be imagined that anyone who has ever seen such a recognition will be tremendously impressed with its importance as evidence in favour of Spiritualism.

I have said that at a séance a number of *believers* forgather with a medium. This needs a word of explanation. The medium may be called a priest of the Spiritualistic belief; he is possessed of a sort of sixth sense, by which he is *en rapport* with the spirits, and is enabled to help them to express themselves by words or signs and to assume bodily shape. In describing the sitters, I use the word “believers” for the reason that it is now very difficult for anyone except a professed Spiritualist to obtain access to a materialising séance. The reason for this will appear in a moment.

All the phenomena which I have roughly described are held by Spiritualists to occur solely through spirit-agency. If an investigator can prove or disprove this fact he will have gone a long way towards proving or disproving the whole case for Spiritualism.

The first séance which I shall describe in detail might stand for a faithful type of similar séances that are held every week in London, and many other places in this country at the present time. Materialising séances are, it is true, less common than formerly—a fact that is due to the invention of the pocket electric flashlamp, which sitters of an inquiring turn of mind have become fond of turning on the medium during the progress of the séance. This is why the mediums of to-day rigorously

exclude all but professed believers from their sittings, for the ostensible reason that such ill-judged attempts at investigation are prejudicial to the success of the séance, and actually dangerous to the medium himself.

MEDIUMS DETECTED IN FRAUD.

"Mr. and Mrs. X. At Home, 7 till 10. Psychic Phenomena."

So ran my invitation—a typical invitation to a typical séance. All I knew of Mr. and Mrs. X. was that they were mediums of good standing amongst Spiritualists, and that it was their custom to make a small charge to those who attended their séances. This, I heard, had been enjoined upon them by their "control," that is, the spirit who generally manifested himself at their séances. But it is, of course, the usual thing for mediums to make a charge, and although that fact is commented upon adversely by unbelievers, I do not think that it can fairly be construed as an argument in itself against their claim to be genuine. The priests of other cults are considered worthy of their hire, and it does not appear unreasonable to me that the priests of Spiritualism should also expect to be paid.

I took a friend with me to the house of Mr. and Mrs. X., as I was very anxious to have unimpeachable corroboration of any discoveries I might succeed in making. When we arrived there were some dozen people already assembled, and almost at once the séance commenced. The room was quite an ordinary one with no special appointments, except that across one corner a curtain was hung, behind which we were allowed to see a small box ottoman, apparently empty, though no close examination was permitted.

The male medium took his place on a chair in front of this curtained inclosure. The sitters formed a semicircle round, and some four or five feet away. Presently the medium was seized with tremblings. This was the sign that he was being controlled. He was helped into the cabinet by his wife, the curtain was drawn, and the gas put out.

After a short wait the curtains part, and we see the medium apparently in a state of trance, with his head bent forward. And on

his hair on lines of fire is traced the Greek OMEGA (Ω).

The curtains are closed again, a short interval elapses, and the faint strains of a musical-box are heard; gradually these grow louder and louder, till at last the full volume of sound bursts upon us. It appears to come from the cabinet, and then slowly to float about the room.

The music ceases. The lights are turned up, and the medium is found in a state of trance, no trace of the musical-box anywhere.

The light is put out and the curtains drawn. Once more the strains of melody greet our ears, but this time they come from the farthest corner of the room near the ceiling. Looking up, we are able dimly to discern the head, shoulders, and hands of a spirit form playing some stringed instrument.

Some are greatly affected, and all are in a state of nervous excitement and tension which bodes well for further manifestations.

The light is turned up, when suddenly the lady medium is controlled. She tells us that she is travelling in realms of light, a light so pure and lovely as never was on land or sea. She is the bearer of messages from the spirits, who say they will try to materialise a complete form who will converse with us.

Waking up as suddenly as she went to sleep, she puts the light out, and at once a spirit addresses us from the cabinet. He is a merry individual, and indulges in jocular remarks. Then a lady spirit makes some mundane observations. She concludes: "He comes," and thereon a stately form emerges from the cabinet. He is partially luminous, and carries a luminous globe in his hand which he holds near his face to make it more visible. With majestic tread he walks round the circle. The lady medium recognises him as King Draco. He gives a gracious inclination of his head, moves his hands as if to bless, and retires into the cabinet.

AN UNREHEARSED EFFECT.

This should have closed the séance. To-night an unrehearsed effect was in store for the believers.

As the form entered the cabinet, he sat down on what he thought was the settee. It



Mediums occasionally allow themselves to be searched before a seance. Unless this is done by one who knows what he is looking for, however, the search is likely to be abortive. In the first photograph, Mr. Marriott is seen dressed in a robe of filmy white, which in the second he is holding in his hand compressed into the compass of a pocket handkerchief. As the medium is almost always a conjuror of some skill, the successful hiding of so small an object is generally easy, in spite of any searching.

happened to be my knees. I had quietly slipped into the curtained inclosure and was sitting, waiting for him to come back. As my arms went round him he gave a yell followed by language which I will not repeat. My friend had the light up in a moment. And there for the faithful was the edifying sight of the medium, clothed in flimsy white draperies, struggling in the arms of myself! His wife shrieked out that we had murdered her husband and came to his rescue. Fortunately, she was restrained by some of the others present.

When quiet was restored, we proceeded to unrobe the medium, and, as he was in his stocking feet, allowed him to resume his shoes. His wig and beard were examined, and the globe found to be a hollow glass ball with a neck closed by a cork. It contained

phosphorus oil, a substance which becomes luminous when the cork is removed from the bottle and the air gets to it. The harmless looking box ottoman proved to be a regular Pandora's box. Among its contents were the musical box, a small thing in a padded cloth case with a hinged lid. By opening and closing this lid the music could be made louder and softer at will. A wire frame clothed in a thin, gauzy material fitted with a crude mask and a cardboard lute. Behind the lute was a means of attaching the musical-box to it. All the garments had been prepared with luminous paint. The effect of the floating head was managed by dangling the wire shape at the end of a jointed fishing-rod.

Our money was hastily returned to us, and the party broke up in an excitement that bordered on hysteria on the part of some of

the believers. On visiting the house next day I found that the birds had flown. Mr. and Mrs. X. had vanished into thin air; though, as I afterwards found, they contrived to keep in touch with some of the circle they had gathered round them, who still, strangest of all, maintained their faith in these incapable charlatans.

I have given the story of this séance at some length because it is really typical of a great number of séances that are constantly being held, and which really come more properly under the category of inferior exhibitions of conjuring.

But I do not wish it to be thought I arrived hastily at the conclusion that this séance was typical of all. I did not for a moment maintain that by the exposure of one fraudulent medium I had demolished the whole Spiritualistic fabric; and, when preparing to investigate the phenomena produced by the many mediums who have been from time to time brought to my notice, I have always done my best to approach the task in a sympathetic spirit and with an open mind.

A favourite argument of Spiritualists is, that there can be no imitation of what does not actually exist, that is to say, by proving Mr. and Mrs. X. to be frauds, I had also demonstrated the existence of mediums who were not frauds. Most of my readers will hold views of their own as to the value of this argument, but it is certainly accepted as logical by many Spiritualists, and it indirectly brought me further valuable opportunities of investigating the work of mediums who were in quite another class from Mr. and Mrs. X. These opportunities were generally provided by believers who had been themselves so thoroughly deceived, that they were confident that the mediums had not resorted to trickery; and I must admit that, in some cases I have had under my notice, it would be perfectly excusable for anyone, not possessing a professional knowledge of the resources of the modern conjuror, to be completely deceived.

A WHISTLING SPIRIT.

I will now describe a séance at which I was given every opportunity for thorough investigation. I was introduced to this séance by a believer, and found the room in which it was

to be held was large and well-furnished. I was allowed to search both the medium and his cabinet. The room was the front half of a double drawing-room, and the cabinet was set up near folding doors in the centre. It was a flimsy contrivance of curtains on wooden rods, and apparently the last thing in which it was possible to conceal anything.

First we searched the medium and then the cabinet, and, when we were satisfied that there was nothing suspicious, the lights were turned out and the spirit forms appeared. In this instance there was no wandering musical-box, but the spirits regaled us with operatic airs which were very well whistled. And the ghost kept on whistling while walking about the room, though you could see no movement of any of the features.

As the séance progressed many forms appeared—forms of people of different ages and sexes. Many of these were recognised by the sitters! Some were recognised by the fact that the tune whistled was the favourite one of the deceased, others after prompting from the medium.

How was it done? The explanation is very simple. The cabinet was at one end of the room, the sitters at the other. There was a space of twelve feet between the front of the cabinet and the circle of sitters. Behind the cabinet were the folding doors. In the back room there was an assortment of costumes, wigs, beards, and other necessities for making up. This room was as carefully darkened as the front room. Here a concealed assistant was stationed. As soon as the front room was darkened, she opened the door, the hinges of which had been well oiled so as to work noiselessly, and handed out the dresses one by one as required. This operation was completely masked by the cabinet; in fact, had the cabinet been slightly higher, the whole thing could have been worked in full light without fear of detection.

The folding doors put me on to the scent, and when I noticed that some oil had trickled down from one of the hinges, my surmise became a certainty. The illusion owed its success to the fact that, if a sound is produced in a direct line with and behind the object purporting to produce it, the ear

cannot detect exactly where the sound comes from. And I noticed that, while the form moved, it did not do so from side to side, but simply walked backwards and forwards in a line with the cabinet. The whistler, of course, left the back room, and did the whistling from the cabinet.

On this occasion I waited till the other sitters had gone. Then I boldly taxed the medium with his deceit. At first he was very angry, and threatened me with the police. Seeing that nothing was to be gained by bluffing, he confessed, and showed me his stock-in-trade.

MORE INGENIOUS FRAUDS.

Cleverly as these séances were worked, they had one serious defect. And that was that when the form was visible the medium was lost.

This defect was overcome at many séances I have since taken part in.

In one instance in London the house was a large and imposing one—evidently the abode of people of substance. The interior was quite in keeping with the exterior, and there was every sign of wealth. A charge was made for sittings, and I might add that this, also, was quite in keeping with the opulent aspect of the house.

The room used for the séances was a large, oak-panelled one, with a ceiling to match, and furnished in substantial style. The cabinet was simply a curtain hanging from the ceiling, and covering one corner of the room. There were similar curtains on the other walls, and also at the window.

Every facility was given for examination, and, in addition, the medium allowed himself to be fastened to a chair after he had been put in the curtained inclosure.

The lights were turned quite low, not out, so that there was just enough light to make the darkness visible. The manifestations were really remarkable. When the curtains were drawn, the medium was seen sitting, tied, and there was a shadowy form behind him. The form was not very distinct, and gave quite a vapoury impression.

The curtains being closed and reopened, revealed a startlingly pretty picture—an angelic choir of three forms, who sang quite

melodiously, and while singing actually hovered in the air outside the cabinet; all the while the medium could be seen entranced within.

The effect was simply electrical, and yet it did not convince me that the denizens of another world can revisit this mundane sphere. To my mind the thing was just too theatrical. Before the appearance of each form a cold current of air could be distinctly felt coming into the room. As all the doors and windows were closed, it could not come from any of them. The faithful also felt it, but to them it was only a proof of the genuineness of the manifestations. I wanted to know where it came from. I had my own suspicions, but I wanted to verify them.

Methods that had succeeded elsewhere were, I knew, useless here. But everything comes to him who waits. I am not going to say how I was enabled to find out the exact truth, beyond saying that when rogues fall out honest men come by their own.

Here is the explanation. The ceiling was, as I have said, of oak, and, as such ceilings usually are, it was panelled. The panel in the curtained recess had been cut out and another fitted which could be opened or closed at will. In the room above there was a light ladder, covered with black felt, which could be let down noiselessly. Up and down this the spirits travelled. The curtains and general darkness prevented the connections being seen. The forms were human ones, clothed in luminous garments. These being of a very thin material, produced the effect of vapourishness.

PHOTOGRAPHING A SPIRIT.

Phenomena were produced recently before a distinguished scientific man who vouched for their genuineness. They were remarkable in the fact that no cabinet was used, and that there was light enough for the forms to be photographed. I eventually succeeded, after much difficulty and at no inconsiderable expense, in gaining admittance to similar séances.

The house was quite an ordinary one in a highly-respectable row, and the room an ordinary-sized drawing-room. It was simply

furnished. Against one wall there was a couch of the ordinary description. There were no hangings anywhere except the window draperies at the other end of the room.

The séance was a private one. I took my camera with me, and before the sitting commenced placed it near the window which was behind it, and focussed it on the couch. I capped the lens and put in the plate. All this was done in the broad daylight.

The medium now entered and took her seat on the couch.

The shutter fitted to the window was closed, and the room thus made quite dark. I was asked to believe that the darkness would enable a more perfect development of the form, and I was told that as soon

as the form was fully developed the window-shutters would be opened so as to give me light enough to take the photograph. There were only three of us in the room, the door was locked, and so it was apparently impossible for anything in human shape to come in.

In the darkness a shadowy form slowly emerged from the side of the medium, who was lying full length on the couch. It got more and more distinct. Presently it spoke, chided my carping doubts, and ordered the window-shutter to be opened.

I uncapped the lens. The opened shutter flooded the room with light, and I saw the form apparently emerging from the side of the medium who was lying on the couch.



This photograph was taken by a four hours' exposure in an absolutely dark room, the face and clothing of the spirit-form being painted with luminous paint. To the human eye the face appears as very much less distinct than in the photograph; and it is significant of the credulity of the average sitter that this fantastic figure has been "recognised" on many occasions by people to whom it has appeared as the spirit of a departed friend or relative.

The shutter was quickly closed. I capped my lens at the same moment. At once the shutter was re-opened, but the form had disappeared.

When I developed the plate, I found correctly photographed just what I saw.

Apparently this was a manifestation convincing enough to turn the most utter sceptic into a believer. And yet, clever as it was, there was a flaw which gave me the clue, and again I was able subsequently to verify my suspicions.

The flaw was a slight one. When the sitting commenced, the couch was close against the wall. When the sitting was over, there was a space between the couch and the wall. Without saying anything, I quietly

moved the couch farther out, and there I found that the skirting board had been neatly cut. This made an opening through which a small person could creep. The house on the other side of the wall I found was also tenanted by the medium. The trick was clear. When the room was darkened, the couch had been moved forward slightly. The sudden transition from light to darkness, and the closing of the shutter, effectually hid the movement. The confederate now appeared. Rising slowly behind the couch, his form was at first invisible, but, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, it seemed to grow more solid. As soon as it was properly arranged, daylight was admitted. The closing of

the shutter and the capping of the lens took time enough to allow the form to get out of sight and close the trap door in the skirting-board. It was due to an oversight that the couch was not put back. Or, perhaps, the thing had been done so often without remark that they had grown careless.

I could multiply cases, more or less ingenious, almost to infinity. But those I have described are representative of a very large number of séances investigated with a considerable expenditure of time and money.

But in no case did I ever encounter a single manifestation which by any stretch of the imagination could be described as having come from the world of spirits; and those of my readers who have themselves witnessed phenomena similar to those I have described, though they may have believed at the time that the conditions of the séance precluded trickery, will probably find, if they tax their memory, that in almost every case one or other of the methods I have described would provide a rational explanation of what at the time seemed a miracle.

PICTORIAL EVIDENCE.

I have gone farther than merely establishing—to my own satisfaction, at any rate—the fact that materialisations at séances are produced by fraud. I myself have produced the same effects—also by fraud, of course, or, perhaps I should say, by purely physical means. The pictures which appear in these pages show materialisations similar to those met with at séances, and photographed direct.

The photograph of myself bound in a chair surrounded by spirit hands gives an excellent idea of this very startling phenomenon, which is produced at the séances of several well-known mediums. But the companion picture of the same scene taken in the full, cold light of day is a very different thing, and shows how crude the deception really is. The hands are merely gloves stuffed with sawdust or inflated with air, and painted with luminous paint to render them vaguely visible in the darkened room.

Avowed Spiritualists who have seen these spirits of my own production have frequently refused to believe that I was not a medium.

(Next month our inquiry will deal with "Spirit Messages"—the ostensibly occult phenomena by which the dead communicate with the living by means of the planchette, automatic writing, and various other methods.)

Only by displaying the apparatus by which the materialisations were brought about have I convinced them that my spirits were merely due to exaggerated conjuring tricks; and, curiously enough, while admitting that the spirits I evoked were at least as realistic as those seen at séances, they will very seldom agree that my ability to call up such realistic spectres by trickery is any argument against the *bona fides* of the mediums who profess to do the same thing by their psychic powers.

And I am well aware that many Spiritualists have a blind faith in their own pet mediums that no mere evidence can shake. Only the other day I was talking to a prominent Spiritualist, whose belief is absolutely fixed; and, in reply to all my arguments and demonstrations, he merely shook his head, and, with a smile, observed: "Ah, my friend, you haven't seen what I have seen."

He was wrong. Fortunately, I had seen very much more than he had seen; and in that fact lies the whole explanation of one man's belief and another man's disbelief—one sees too little; one too much.

The Editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE has mentioned in his introduction to this article the names of some distinguished men who have found themselves able to embrace the Spiritualistic creed, and I am quite serious when I say that the presence of Sir William Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge in the ranks of Spiritualists appeals to me irresistibly as infinitely more phenomenal than any wonders of the séance I have ever witnessed. I can only explain the fact that they do find a basis for belief in their séance experiences, by the supposition that, their attention focussed on a dream-mountain of theory, they overlook the mole-hill of (to me) unblinkable fact. And I hope I may be believed when I say this: I ask for an opportunity of investigating any phenomena that have hitherto seemed to them inexplicable except in the acceptance of the Spiritualistic creed, not with the mere desire of being in a position to say: "I told you so," but because I have an honest wish to see the séance mongers once and finally unmasked if they are in reality fraudulent; if they are not, and I can be convinced of the fact, my recantation will not be a moment delayed.

Part Two:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 29
Number 172
April 1910

April.



Automatic chalk-writing—one of the mysteries of “spirit-messages” explained and exploded in a startling account of our investigations in Spiritualism: see “Spirit-Messages,” by William Marriott (page 357).

On the Edge of the Unknown.

*"Is Spiritualism a fraud?" Foreword by the Editor
to the second article in striking new series describing
our investigations of this important question.*

Can the dead return? Can they communicate with the living? Is the greatest riddle of the Universe on the point of being solved by the developments of Modern Spiritualism?

Or, on the other hand, are all occult Phenomena—the spirit-messages of trance-mediums, the spirit-forms of the séance, the prophecies of palmists, astrologers, and fortune-tellers of all kinds—merely catch-penny tricks to charm money from the pockets of the credulous?

These are big questions. They have already been left too long in the limbo of untried actions; and I have determined to institute a searching inquiry into the whole subject, and to throw the limelight of publicity on to the methods of all who practise the so-called occult arts of mediumship, psychometry, spirit-healing, astrology, palmistry, and the like.

Spiritualism will be placed on its trial. Independent investigations are now being made on my behalf, and all the evidence bearing on the subject will be carefully sifted and set forth. I have been fortunate in securing the co-operation of Mr. William Marriott, who has made the occult a life study. *Light*, the official organ of the London Spiritualist Alliance says: "Mr. Marriott is admittedly the best exponent of the theory of fraud in Spiritualism in this country." After a searching and thorough investigation, Mr. Marriott's studied conclusion is that all the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism are produced by trickery. With that conclusion, on the evidence placed before me, I wholly agree.

Last month, Mr. Marriott gave a full insight into the methods by which mediums produce their phenomena at séances. He himself has seen on countless occasions the grotesque and painful exhibitions of spirit-materialisations, by which the feelings of sitters are harrowed under the suggestion that they are actually the spirits of dead relatives and friends; and he advanced convincing proofs that all the mediums who produce materialised spirit-forms are tricksters pure and simple. Furthermore, he challenged any of the leading Spiritualists—among them Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Crookes—to bring forward a medium who can produce a single phenomenon which will bear the test of searching and intelligent investigation.

In this number Mr. Marriott deals with the most crucial problem in the whole domain of Spiritualism—that of spirit-messages. The Spiritualists believe that the dead can and do communicate with the living. Mr. Marriott contends that they do not and cannot, and declares that the vast number of "spirit"-messages which are constantly being delivered by mediums, by means of trance-speech and trance-writing, are absolutely dishonest and fraudulent. This conclusion directly challenges that arrived at by Sir Oliver Lodge in his book "*The Survival of Man*," but Mr. Marriott's arguments are based on facts that he can fully substantiate; they prove conclusively that all mediums who profess to receive messages from the spirit-world are obtaining money daily under false pretences, and that the public ought to be protected by the authorities against frauds at once so flagrant and so heartless.

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A sentence written in one of the ciphers used by mediums who profess to receive spirit messages from the dead. Next month the key to the cipher will be given and the message translated. Meanwhile readers may care to try their skill at reading it for themselves.

II.—SPIRIT MESSAGES.

An account of my startling investigations in the domain of Spiritualism. Important evidence on the methods of mediums who profess to receive communications from the spirit world. The frauds of trance-writing and trance-speech exposed.

By WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

FREQUENCY OF SPIRIT MESSAGES.

WRITTEN messages from the spirit world are the most frequent of all the phenomena of present-day Spiritualism. They have to a very large extent superseded the code of raps and knocks by which earlier communications were conveyed, and many trance-mediums who formerly delivered their messages by word of mouth, now prefer to write them.

Regarded merely as evidence on the genuineness or otherwise of Spiritualism, the importance of spirit messages, both written and spoken, is immense.

The Psychical Research Society has had innumerable cases brought to its notice, and Sir Oliver Lodge affirms that "their general truth is accepted without hesitation by all its prominent members."

I shall not ask the readers of this magazine to reverse that decision, or, indeed, to come to any decision at all "without hesitation."

I ask them, rather, to hesitate as long as they please, and ponder as carefully as they will upon the evidence I put before them. In publishing my investigations in the occult it is not my opinions which I wish to thrust upon the world. It is my facts.

TRICK-WRITING AND TRANCE-WRITING.

Spirit messages are delivered by the mediums in a wide variety of ways, but their methods fall under two main heads, which I might, for convenience sake, label roughly:

(1) Trick-writing, and (2) Trance-writing, closely allied to which is trance-speaking.

The essential difference between them is this: The trick-writing is "miraculously" produced by the medium upon a slate or sheet of paper, which has been previously examined—and not only the message but the writing itself is supposed to be due to spirit agency. Trance-writing, on the other hand, is frankly written by the hand of the medium, who is at the time under the control of the spirit of some departed person.

Trick-writing bears a strong family likeness to many of the phenomena met with at the materialising séance. Having seen an exhibition of trick-writing, one does not ask "Is it fraud?" but rather "Where is the fraud?"—and with a little research the answer will be forthcoming. But instinctive distrust of this kind is not evidence, unfortunately. I hope, however, to be able to show that where spirit messages are concerned it is sufficiently well founded.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

The first recorded "spirit message" is the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, recorded in the Book of Daniel. We are told that Belshazzar saw a hand appear on the wall and write the words: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN." "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

I will not enter into a discussion as to how

that writing was produced, but I will say, and say emphatically, that such writing has never been produced by any medium under those identical conditions. It does, however, form the basis of all modern-day writings, and it has a counterpart in present day Spiritualism.

But this is how the phenomenon appears to the onlookers: In a partially darkened room, the medium stands a foot or two from one of the walls; his hands are clasped behind him. Then suddenly upon the wall in front of him a hand appears and traces a message in luminous writing. To all appearances it is an exact reproduction of the magic manner in which

the death and downfall of Belshazzar were predicted.

But look closely at the photograph illustrating the seeming miracle. The hands of the medium are clearly seen behind his back, you will say. But look again! The left hand, it is true, is the hand of the medium; but the right hand is—a dummy! The genuine right hand, swathed to the wrist in black velvet, is engaged in writing upon the wall a peculiarly appropriate communication from the "spirit world."

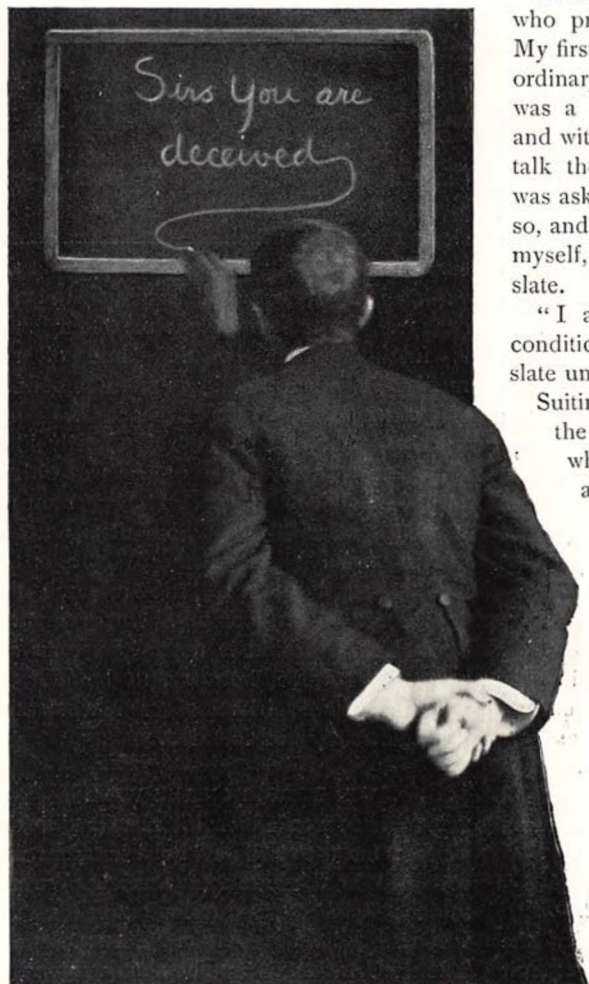
SPIRITS THAT WRITE ON SLATES.

I have had many experiences with mediums who produce their messages upon slates. My first séance of this kind was held in an ordinary sitting-room, and in the centre there was a small oblong table of polished wood and without a cloth. After a little preliminary talk the medium produced a slate which I was asked to examine on both sides. I did so, and it was then placed on the table by myself, and we sat with our hands on the slate. Nothing happened.

"I am afraid," said the medium, "the conditions are not right. Let us hold the slate under the table."

Suiting the action to the words he placed the slate under the corner of the table, where we both held it. Almost immediately the sound of writing was heard. The medium was convulsed so that I lost my hold of the slate, but regained it almost at once. I was then allowed to bring the slate up, and on its upper surface found a message badly written, and very short.

The method employed in this case was a very simple one, but requires a considerable amount of practice. To develop this phase of Psychic Force, obtain an ordinary thimble that fits your first finger well. In the top of it drill a small hole. Into this hole fasten a small piece of slate pencil. To the rim of the thimble attach a short length of cord elastic, and fasten the other end of this to the armhole of your vest. All that is necessary is to get the thimble on to the finger, and with it write the



A modern reproduction of the Writing on the Wall, described in the Book of Daniel. Apparently a spirit-hand appears, and writes on the wall, while the hands of the medium are clasped behind him. The deception lies in the fact that the right hand of the medium seen behind his back is a dummy: the real hand being engaged in writing the peculiarly appropriate message.

message. Remember, however, that you must write backwards. As soon as the writing is finished, give a shudder. This serves two purposes.

First, it enables you to push the thimble off your finger, when it will fly up your sleeve. Secondly, it enables you to turn the slate round so that the blank side is undermost, and the written surface next the table.

At my next slate sitting I was asked to sit down while the medium stood at my side. I handed him a clean slate, and, taking this in his right hand, he drew up his chair and sat down, immediately putting the slate on the table.

Placing our hands upon it, the sound of writing was heard almost at once. And, on looking, the slate bore a long message of no particular import, but well and carefully written. This seemed a genuine enough manifestation, but it was nothing of the kind. What really happened was this: The message had been prepared beforehand on a slate exactly like the one handed to me.

This prepared slate was hidden under a small cabinet, which was standing near the table. As the medium sat down he deftly dropped his slate on the floor, and picked the prepared one from its hiding-place. And this he placed at once on the table, writing downwards, and when he had sat down pushed the original slate under the cabinet.

Done quickly and neatly, the exchange was almost imperceptible. To produce the sound of writing, he attached a small clamp to the frame of the table. This had a piece of slate pencil attached, whilst another was fastened by a couple of small loops of thread to his right knee. And by rubbing one against the other the sound was produced.

How did I discover his method? After the sitting I was walking round the table, and my foot got accidentally under the cabinet. I felt something there, and a slight kick revealed the slate. Of course, the medium was quite unable to account for it. So I explained the reason.

Then he confessed, showed me the clasp, and, in fact, explained the whole fraud. An acquaintance of mine who had been instructed by me, afterwards had a sitting with this same medium. He was left in the room

for a short time alone. In that brief space he got hold of the concealed slate and added a message to the one already there. I leave you to imagine the feelings of the medium when this was disclosed!

This same principle was used by another medium with whom I had sittings. But he had improved upon it. Instead of using a cabinet for hiding his slate, he had made a receptacle for this purpose under the seat of his chair. The exchange was therefore much more neatly executed, and there was nothing left to tell the tale, the opening in the side of the chair having been made so neatly as to be practically examination-proof.

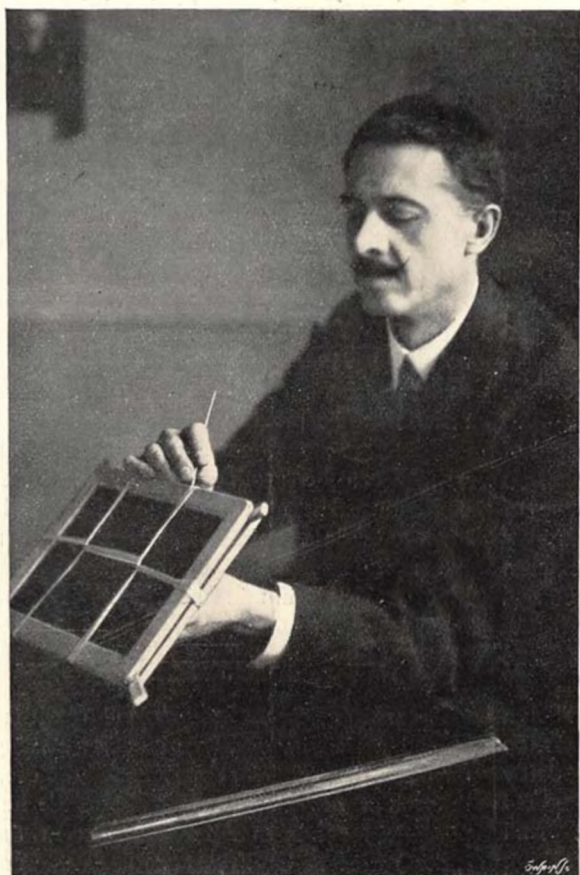
There are many dozens of ways in which writing can be produced on slates, under conditions that make it *almost* impossible for it to be done by human agency. Almost, but not quite, and if the sitter bears that little distinction in mind he will not easily be hoodwinked.

A "MIRACLE" EXPLODED.

A certain celebrated medium at one time reaped a rich harvest by producing writing on slates provided by the sitters, and closed in such a way as to make it apparently impossible for human agency to get at the inside surface. Ordinary school slates were provided by the sitters, who, at their own homes, wrote a question on one of them. The slates were then by the sitters placed face to face, and screwed together, the heads of the screws being sealed. Yet answers were obtained in writing on the inner surface. The method remained a secret for a long time, but I eventually discovered it, and will guarantee to perform this miracle myself.

It is really a very simple one. All slates are made with wooden frames. If two of these slates are screwed together by *four* screws, one in the *centre* of each side, the corners are left unprotected, and it is a comparatively easy matter there to introduce small wooden wedges. The slates can thus be separated, in some cases so much as a quarter of an inch, and yet the screws are not in any way disturbed nor the seals broken. This separation is the first step.

The next is to read the question. This can be done quite easily by holding the



Spirit messages are frequently produced on the inner surfaces of slates that have been tied or even screwed together. The method is shown in the photograph. Wedges are introduced between the wooden frames of the slates; and the medium can then write the message by introducing an umbrella-rib, with a tiny piece of slate pencil affixed, between the slates.

opening so that the light illuminates the space between the slates.

Lastly, the answer has to be written. For this a thin umbrella rib, with a minute portion of slate pencil at its point, makes an ideal instrument. When the wedges are removed, the sides of the frame spring back, and there is nothing to show how the writing was done.

Mediums, it must be remembered, will stick at nothing to bring off an effect. I have known and seen cases in which slates have been provided by sitters so screwed and sealed together as to make it quite impossible to get at their inner surface in this way.

Was the medium downhearted? Not a bit of it. By means of wax he first took an impression of the seals, and, with the

assistance of plaster of paris, made a die. Having read the question, he gave a suitable answer, which, of course, was a lengthy one and well-written. The slates were then screwed up again, and re-sealed with the assistance of the plaster of paris die, and there was not a trace left of how the fraud had been worked.

People who fasten their slates up thus securely, as they imagine, and leave them in the medium's possession for any length of time, so that the work can be done in a masterly manner at leisure, must realise that it is practically impossible to close two slates together in such a manner that, given time and the requisite skill, they cannot be separated and re-closed without leaving any trace of the operation.

STILL A GREATER MARVEL.

In all these cases the writing was done out of sight. I have seen it done before my eyes. At one séance an ordinary slate was used. It was put on the table, and on it were placed chalks of various colours.

I was now requested to ask a question. I did so. Then I was asked in which colour I would like the writing to be written. I selected my colour and the other pieces were removed, and, behold, the chosen piece scrawled an answer to my question! The answer was brief, certainly—only two words; but there it was, written under my very eyes. Surely here was a genuine manifestation of spirit force.

But once again things were not what they seemed. One of the pieces of chalk, by some mysterious agency—probably my fingers!—found its way into my pocket. And in the quietude of my den at home the secret was laid bare.

An analysis of the morsel showed me that it was not all chalk. The morsels were composed of chalk, mixed—with iron filings! The slate was an ordinary one, but the table was not. It had a very thin top, and

underneath this, but, of course, hidden by the frame of the table, there was concealed a powerful magnet. The movement of this by the medium caused the piece of chalk, impregnated, as it was, with iron, to follow it. And thus was the writing accomplished.

To make quite sure, I had another sitting. For this I went prepared with a morsel of chalk of the same colour as the one I had surreptitiously brought away and examined. This piece was, however, free from any taint of iron.

We went through the same performance as before, and I chose the colour I had with me. When examining the chalks, my piece and the medium's piece got mixed up, and it was my piece that found its way on to the slate. And it was an unruly member. Nothing the medium could do would make it move, much less write, and he was clearly nonplussed.

We tried some of the other colours, which were as obedient as could be, and finally the first piece condescended to perform its task. It did so for the simple reason that I had removed my piece, and replaced the one prepared by the medium. Jokingly I quoted the well-known lines :

No magnet ever,
Be it never so clever,
Can attract a silver churn.

The medium looked at me. The thunders of his wrath were about to descend, but they did not. Perhaps the twinkle in my eye turned them aside. At any rate, before I left I had the satisfaction of working the thing for myself.

Should you ever come across writing done by this method, you will easily be able to detect it by the fact that the words run one into the other.

LETTER-WRITING EXTRAORDINARY.

At another sitting a piece of paper was given to me for examination. I marked it so that

it could not be exchanged, and then saw it placed between two slates. In a short time, the slates being separated, the paper was found with a message on it in what looked like black ink. It was quite a convincing test—till it was found out.

Mediums use every means at their disposal for producing their effects, as I have already stated. Electricity and magnetism have been made to play their parts. And now we see them making use of chemistry. Sulphuric acid has the peculiar property of blackening a substance impregnated with it when heat is



An exceedingly ingenious method of producing "spirit messages." A piece of soft chalk is mixed with iron filings, and placed on a slate. By tracing the desired message backwards with a magnet underneath the table on which the slate is lying, the chalk can now be made to write. The words written in the photograph are "magnetic writing." It will be noticed that the writing runs straight on—this is unavoidable in this form of "spirit-writing."

applied. This is the property made use of: A weak solution of sulphuric acid—about ten drops to a wineglassful of water—makes a perfectly colourless solution. If white paper be written on with this and the paper subjected to heat, the writing will appear in black characters.

And this was the secret of the precipitated writing. If unglazed paper is used, it is impossible to see that there is anything on it. It can thus be freely examined and signed. One of the two slates used had been well heated. The paper being placed on this and covered with the other one, the heat caused the writing to become visible.

THE CHEMISTRY OF SPIRITUALISM.

Quite a large number of chemicals are colourless when properly prepared, but become coloured by the application of heat or another chemical. All of these I have found being used by different mediums. Each one uses that with which he gets the best results.

One of the simplest of these chemical changes of colour was illustrated by a medium to myself in the following way: The sitting was a comparatively long one, and I had at the commencement been given various slips of paper on which to write my questions. All of these had been answered by the slates and in other ways. One alone remained. To get an answer to this, I was requested to re-write it on the top half of a half-sheet of paper, and to sign it. This piece was then put in an envelope and sealed. It never left my hand. In a short time I opened it, and, below my question, found an answer in ink, and the ink hardly dry.

I put the envelope that had been used in my pocket. Examining it at home, I found traces of the writing on the inside. As the ink was hardly dry when I took the paper out, this was not surprising, perhaps. But I found another thing, which was that this part of the envelope had been treated chemically. And the chemical that had been used was gallic acid.

The fraud was now clear. The paper on which I had re-written my question had the answer already written on it, the writing having been done with a weak solution of

iron. The envelope had been treated with a solution of gallic acid. When these two chemicals came in contact they formed ink. And that was all the mystery.

How did the answer fit the question? Remember I had written several questions. Sufficient time had elapsed between the writing and the answer to enable the medium's assistant to write the answer to the question.

A BLINDFOLD MEDIUM.

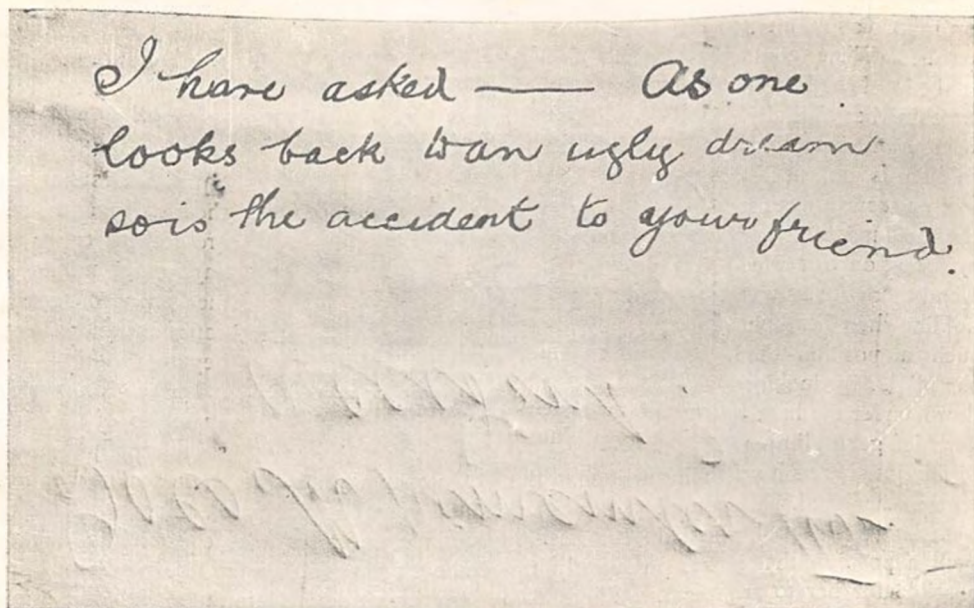
One of my most recent experiments was with a medium who was blindfolded when writing her spirit messages. A friend of mine, interested in psychic matters, wished to get into communication with a near relative who had been killed recently in a disastrous motor accident, in which three lives were lost.

He fixed an appointment, and in due course we arrived at the address, which was just off Bond Street, and entered an elegantly-appointed flat. We were interviewed first by the medium's sister, who told us that it was not the practice to allow more than one sitter to be present at the same time. After some persuasion, however, this point was waived; the sister withdrew, and the medium, a girl of about twenty, entered.

Her procedure, she told us, was as follows: She would sit, blindfolded, at a table, between myself and my friend. He would write his questions on blank sheets of paper; then, turning the paper face downwards, would place it in front of her, and she would endeavour to write the answers.

First of all, she instructed him to write a question asking "the friends" if "the conditions" were right. The following interchange of questions and answers then took place:

- 1.—Q. Are we correctly placed for communication with the friends?
A. Yes, I will try, I think I can manage as we are.
- 2.—Q. Is M. present, and can she communicate?
A. You ask for M. Yes, they are here. They cannot themselves communicate, but can answer through me. They are as yet too immature to address you personally, but will try to put down something before you go. Arthur (signature very indistinct).
- 3.—Q. You speak of they—I mentioned only one—can you name the others?



Here is illustrated the ingenious method of a "spirit message" medium now practising in London. She is blindfolded and the sitter then writes a question on a sheet of paper, turns it face down, and places it in front of the medium, who then writes an answer to the question. Without conveying much information, she makes it clear that she knows what the question is. To see how it is done, hold this photograph upside down in front of a mirror. The question—"Does M. remember the accident?"—shows through and can be distinctly read: the medium, of course, by long practice reads it easily backwards through the paper.

- A. Friend, we always speak of one of us in the plural. We are all one here, we are not single. We are all part of a great brotherhood.
- 4.—Q. Does M. remember the accident?
- A. I have asked—As one looks back to an ugly dream so is the accident to your friend.
- 5.—Q. Have you met John and the others who passed over with you?
- A. Yes, I can understand. Now I am asked to ask you something (something to do with your question, you know). Do you remember a promise you once made?
- 6.—Q. I have made more than one promise. Who asks the question?
- A. Yes, you made more than one. But to me I see one special one.
- 7.—Q. What friend asks the question?
- A. You must surely remember me. I am always near you. You know.
- 8.—Q. Did I know you on the earth plane?
- A. Why, yes, of course!
- 9.—Q. Cannot the friends give you the name of the person who asked me the question? Please try.
- A. Listen, I am tall. I am dark. I am straight. I have dark eyes. I have grey clothes. I sometimes require glasses. I am an adviser. I have often advised you. You may not always recognise my help, but it is mine. I would like you to know me.
- 10.—Q. Your name or initial, please?
- A. Jack.
- The first glance at these questions and answers reveals two important facts: the medium found it easy to read the questions, but difficult to answer most of them except in an evasive and indirect way. Whenever a definite answer was attempted, it was hopelessly wrong.
- How did she read them? Before explaining this I must mention a point about one of the questions. After asking his fourth question, my friend said to the medium: "I have in my pocket a question already written. Will you try to answer that?" The medium agreed, not very enthusiastically, I thought, and question 5 was turned down and placed before her. Glance now at that question and its answer. It will be seen at once that while all the other answers had at least some relation to their questions this answer is a pure evasion. The medium obviously had no idea what the question was about. Clearly, then, she had some device by which she read the questions, either as they were being written

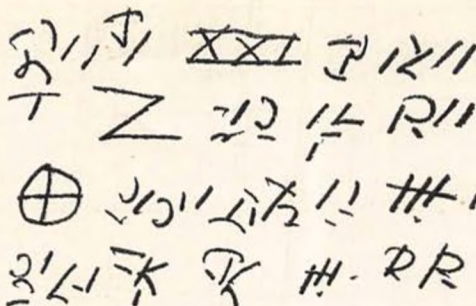
or immediately afterwards. What could it be? I had been watching her carefully, being aware that blind-folding is not necessarily a security against the medium using her eyes, and once or twice I had thought she was holding her head in such a position that she might, by looking down under the handkerchief, get a glimpse of the question as it was being written. But, on the other hand, while some of the questions were being prepared, she held her head in such a position that it was manifestly impossible for her to see them. Where then lay the trick? It was quite simple after all; and an examination of the paper, on which the questions were written, subsequently revealed it.

The table at which we had sat was covered with green baize; underneath the baize there was probably india-rubber, but this, of course, I could not make sure of; at any rate, in order to produce any impression with his pencil it was necessary for my friend to press very hard on the paper, owing to the table's soft surface. The consequence was that all the questions showed distinctly through on the reverse side of the paper, and were easily read by the medium, who was, no doubt, well practised in the not very difficult art of reading backwards.

The price charged by this medium was half-a-guinea, not a very low charge when the fact is taken into account that the sitting only lasted half-an-hour.

OBTAINING MONEY UNDER FALSE PRETENCES.

I do not claim to have exhausted the methods by which the mediums produce their results, they are a resourceful class, and new devices are being introduced constantly. But I think I may claim to have established a strong *prima-facie* case against these particular "phenomena." As conjuring-tricks they are often fairly good, as evidence of a spirit world they are always miserably



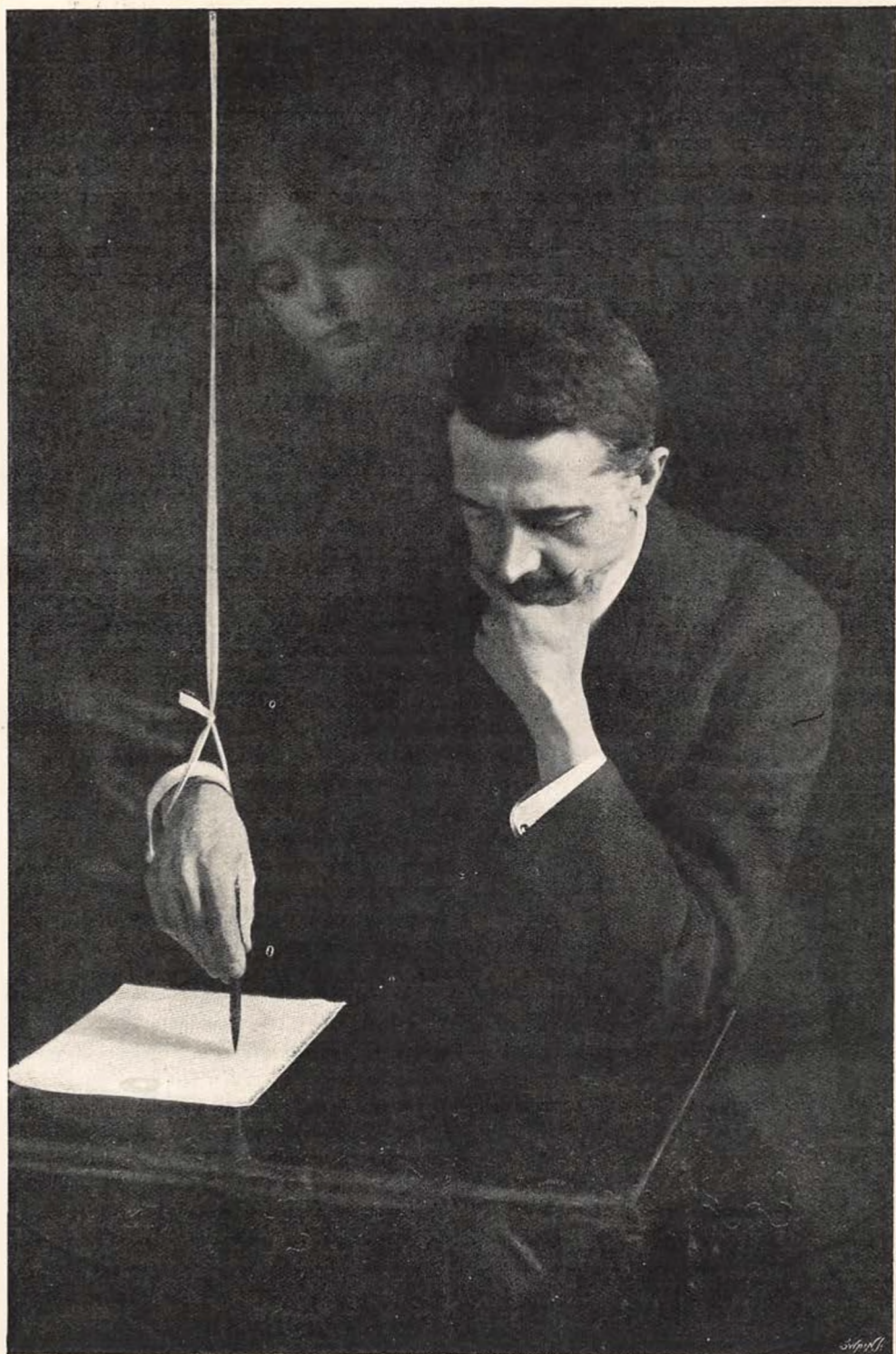
A specimen of automatic writing, apparently in some code or cipher. The writer, however, declared herself unable to decipher it: and, after examination by an expert, it appears doubtful whether the signs have any meaning at all. This puzzle again readers may like to test their skill at solving.

inadequate. The mere fact, however, that these phenomena continue to be produced is evidence that many Spiritualists regard them as genuine, and are content to go on paying out money in the hopes of getting communications from departed friends.

I have given typical examples of the messages usually received.

Occasionally, it is true, when dealing with rich and generous sitters, mediums will take an infinite amount of pains to acquire information about them and their families in order to bring convincing details into their messages; but in the vast majority of cases the communications are childishly futile and should carry their own condemnation. They certainly do not, however; the mysterious nature of the tricks, and the accompanying savour of magic, no doubt accounting for the fact that they are even popular, and that the trick-writer is doing infinitely more to increase the vogue of Spiritualism than the work of all the serious psychic investigators. The trick-writing mediums may generally be harmless, and even well-meaning people, but the fact remains they are gaining their living by conscious fraud, and fraud moreover which, were it not for a mysterious laxity on the part of the authorities, would involve them in police-court proceedings. Half-a-dozen prosecutions of mediums for obtaining money under false pretences, with the attendant limelight of newspaper reports, would do a tremendous amount of good, and might eventually stamp out this particular kind of fraud.

As things are at present, the mediums are allowed openly to advertise in the public press, and to draw fat incomes out of the pockets of the credulous. A fraudulent tradesman or a dishonest bookmaker is only allowed enough rope to hang himself, and I fail to see why preferential treatment should be given to those who defraud in this particular way. What is the reason?



Automatic writing is frequently done as shown in the photograph. The hand of the medium is suspended from a chandelier, and after a while begins to trace on the paper the message from the spirit—who, occasionally, if the "conditions" are favourable, hovers in the background, and is visible to the clairvoyant.

Suppl.

What is hidden
is hidden and
cannot be disclos-
ed by the Planchette



A specimen of writing done by the Planchette, the instrument for recording spirit messages seen on the opposite page.

TRANCE-WRITING.

To the phenomena of trance-writing and trance-speech Spiritualists look for definite proof of their belief, and they claim in the messages, so received from "the other side," actually to have obtained it.

The theory of the trance is that the medium loses his or her own personality, and is controlled by spirit-influences, almost always by a definite spirit who makes his or her identity known in the messages. The medium is, as it were, subconscious, and can obey the spirit-control by speaking or writing what they wish to be communicated, but can do nothing of his or her own volition.

That is the trance in theory, and it is also the trance of the notorious Julia's Bureau in practice. Here the subscription of a guinea to the Borderland Library, and the filling up of a form, entitles the subscriber to communicate with the spirit of any departed friend or relative. This communication is thoughtfully arranged through the instrumentality of Julia, the spirit of a departed Chicago journalist, who acts as the director on the spirit plane, while Mr. W. T. Stead fulfils the same function on this earth. The whole concern is, on the face of it, too ridiculous and fantastic to need further comment. Amongst the mediums who have made this phase of writing famous, foremost in order of importance stand Mrs. Piper, whose genuineness is guaranteed by both the

American and English Psychical Research Societies; Mrs. Thompson, who has given Sir Oliver Lodge many convincing manifestations, and Mrs. Verrall, whom I shall have occasion to mention later.

But "inspired" or "automatic" writing is also done by many individuals who do not even profess to go into a trance at all. Their assertion is that at times they are "impelled" to write, while perfectly conscious, and otherwise perfectly normal. There is in existence a great mass of these automatic and trance-writings; many of them printed and published, some in English, some in foreign languages, others in apparently meaningless hieroglyphics. I have had opportunities of examining a large number of these curious documents, some written in the trance state, others not, and it is a striking fact that there is one feature common to them all. They deal invariably with matters in the everyday knowledge of the writers, and so far from containing anything even faintly resembling a fact about the after life, they deal with nothing but the most mundane ideas—lengthy descriptions of the "Summer Land," a purely earthly conception; treatises on philosophy, mediocre in style and matter; scientific facts garbled and distorted almost out of recognition; feeble satires and diatribes on religion. Yet many of these were declared to be the work of some of the greatest writers and thinkers who have ever lived. Perhaps



Writing with the Planchette. The theory of those who believe in this instrument is that the spirits guide the hand placed upon it, and so deliver their messages to the dwellers on earth. As a matter of fact, it is perfectly easy for anyone, blindfolded or not, to write whatever they wish, as witness the message on the preceding page.

Huxley had this anomaly in mind when he asserted that the only thing to be said in favour of Spiritualism was that it afforded an additional argument against suicide.

SELF-DECEPTION POSSIBLE.

Many of these automatic writings are produced by people who are not professional mediums, and can gain no benefit by professing psychic powers. I believe that the great majority of automatic writers are wilful, if harmless, frauds, and that the remaining minority are also frauds; but with the proviso that they delude even themselves into thinking that spirit-influence is at work.

And this is not necessarily so difficult as might appear. Try a simple experiment. Read a page or two of a book over several times, familiarising yourself with its sense, and memorising some of the phrases. Then, after an interval, take a pencil in your hand, and place it on a sheet of paper. Think of

nothing. Be quite passive. And in a short time you will write, *almost* unconsciously. *Almost*, but not quite.

A simple way of doing this is to suspend your hand by the wrist from a bandage attached to the chandelier or gas bracket. Allow the hand to hang downwards in such a position that you apparently have no control over it. This method of writing is employed by some mediums, and becomes a very striking manifestation when it takes place in a partly-darkened room, and over the medium's shoulder appears the face of the "controlling spirit." The photograph of the phenomenon gives a good idea of its dramatic effect.

The Planchette, also, is an instrument that has been devised for this purpose. It consists of a small, heart-shaped piece of wood, fitted with two wheels movable in all directions, and a place where a pencil can be attached. By placing your hand on this you will get writings, and you will probably get

And behold it came to pass that as the haster walked
through the fields of Paradise - He saw there a woman
She sat alone, yet on her head was a crown with many
jewels - signifying a triumphant life of love & the
jewels emblematical of the souls she had led
into the Paths of Truth.

A specimen of automatic writing. This is a mere fragment, taken from a long allegory, written in rather archaic language. There is a veritable library of works of this kind in existence, many of them printed and published in book form. Their writers claim that they are communications from the spirit-world: all their internal evidence, however, goes to prove that they are produced entirely in the subconscious mind of the human writer.

them more quickly than by the method of suspension.

A couple of specimens of automatic writings are reproduced as an example of what is generally met with. The first (on page 364) is either in some cipher, or else a mere collection of meaningless hieroglyphics; the second is merely an extract from a long allegory in more or less archaic language.

MESSAGES FROM THE LATE F. W. H. MYERS.

There can be no shadow of a doubt that one of the trump cards of the Spiritualists is the fact that distinguished scientific men have found evidence strong enough to satisfy them of the existence of a spirit-world that can communicate with us. Sir Oliver Lodge takes up this definite position, and in his recently published book, "The Survival of Man," discloses the reasons which have led him to do so.

They lie mainly in the communications obtained from departed friends through the agency of trance mediums. Sir Oliver Lodge was a close friend of the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, one of the most convinced believers in spirit-communications. Before his death he had promised that he would, if it lay in his power, communicate with his friends on earth, so that the great riddle might be finally solved. In addition, he left with Sir Oliver Lodge a sealed envelope containing a message known only to himself, with the idea that if he could, through a medium, communicate the contents of this envelope, a striking and positive proof of the genuineness of the manifestation would be established.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in his book, describes the first séance at which messages from Myers began to come through; it took place about a month after his death. The trance medium's communications were spoken, not written, and the messages from Myers were mixed up with those from a spirit called "Nelly," who usually controlled Mrs. Thompson, the medium.

With what words did Myers (through the mouth of Mrs. Thompson) break the tremendous silence of the tomb for the first time?

Lodge, it is not as easy as I thought in my impatience. Gurney^{*} says I am getting on first rate. But I am short of breath.

A spirit short of breath!

Then he went on:

Oh, Lodge, it is like looking at a misty picture. I can distinctly feel I ought to be taking a note of it. I do not feel as if I were speaking, but it is best to record it all.

Tell them I am more stupid than some of those I had to deal with. Oh, Lodge, what it is when I see you? Was it the Albemarle Club we went to when I talked about— Oh, it leaves off.

The last words are apparently spoken by the spirit Nelly, who takes up the tale at the precise point, be it noted, when Myers was about to allude to some specific fact that might possibly have been of some value as evidence. A little later in the séance, Sir Oliver Lodge addressed a question to Myers.

Sir O. L.: Do you want to say anything about the society? (The Society for Psychical Research.)

Myers: Do not think I have forgotten. But I have. I have forgotten just now.

^{*} Gurney had been joint secretary with Myers of the Psychical Research Society.

A little later, he remarked that he had also forgotten his mother's name. Later, again, Myers was asked if on his next appearance he would communicate the message in the sealed envelope. He immediately asked: "What envelope?"

Alas! he had forgotten that also!

Of this sitting, Sir Oliver Lodge says:

It seems to me about the best of Myers' sittings in which I have been immediately concerned. Without being strictly evidential, it was, in fact, as convincing as anything that could be imagined of that kind.

He also remarks:

As to his temporary forgetfulness of the S.P.R., though it will probably be pounced upon as an absurdity by scoffers, yet that struck us at the time as humanly natural and interesting.

It must be remembered that Myers was secretary of the Society, as well as its very life and soul; how he could forget it, and yet remember the existence of the Albemarle Club, is a problem. Why he should forget the all-important sealed envelope is another. But the greatest problem of all is this: Why, having succeeded in getting into touch with his friends on earth, did he not attempt to tell them something of his present state, its conditions, his own feelings—anything, in fact, rather than the pointless and unnecessary chatter which, as is superabundantly evident, was conceived in the brain just as it was issued from the mouth of yet another fraudulent medium?

It would be superfluous to comment further on the result of this sitting. To Sir Oliver Lodge it was "as convincing as anything that could be imagined of that kind." To me, and surely to all unbiassed persons, it is as unconvincing as any alleged phenomena could possibly be.

The spirit of Myers refused, as almost all spirits do, to discuss his present state, and the nearest approach he did make to doing so was on a subsequent occasion when, through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, he addressed this written message to Mrs. Sidgwick, the president of the S.P.R.:

Now, dear Mrs. Sidgwick, in future have no doubt or fear of so-called death, as there is none, as there is certainly intelligent life beyond it.

If anything could make us *doubt* that there

is intelligent life beyond the grave, pale platitudes of this sort would do it.

There remains the sealed envelope. If this test had been successful, it would have been impossible to explain it away. But when at length a medium came forward to communicate the contents, the result was a dismal failure.

It was some time after the death of Myers that Mrs. Verrall, the well-known medium, began a series of automatic writings which she "supposed" to be the work of the spirit of Myers acting through her hand. The reasons which led her to believe that the contents of the envelope had been communicated to her satisfied Sir Oliver Lodge and others that the time had come to put the experiment to the test. Accordingly a meeting was held. The result I give in Sir Oliver Lodge's own words:

"Mrs. Verrall first reported to the meeting the conclusions she had been led to form concerning the envelope from her own script, and read the apparently relevant passages. On the envelope being opened, however, it was found that there was no resemblance between its actual contents and what was alleged by the script to be contained in it."

Which was natural enough. I am only surprised that Sir Oliver Lodge does not find in this failure also something "interesting" and "convincing." It is "humanly natural"—that I am prepared to admit myself.

The facts of the matter are surely clear enough. So long as the production of tawdry phantoms, the turning of tables, and the giving of indefinite answers to vague questions are all that is asked of them, the "spirits" answer readily enough to the call. Confront them with any sensible and serious test, and they obstinately refuse to leave the spirit for the earth plane. If I am one of the "scoffers" alluded to by Sir Oliver Lodge, it is not because of any original bias, but because of the arrant humbug, cheap trickery, and pathetic self-delusion that I have encountered at every point of my investigations of Spiritualism, and I combat the teachings of Sir Oliver Lodge and his co-believers because I believe them to be in defiance of the soundest of all laws—those of common sense and human experience.

(Another important aspect of Spiritualism—the diagnosis and healing of disease by means unknown to and unpractised by the medical profession—will be dealt with next month in our inquiry into the methods of magnetic, spiritual and faith healers.)

Part Three:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 29
Number 173
May 1910

On the Edge of the Unknown.

What Spiritualists think of the "Realities of the Seance." Some Further Exposures. Our Offer to a London Medium. Psychic, Magnetic, and Mental Healers.

BY THE EDITOR.

FEW articles published in PEARSON'S MAGAZINE have excited more interest and elicited more correspondence than our inquiry into the claim of Spiritualists that they are able to produce the visible forms of people long since dead.

I have received not only a large number of letters, but several personal visits from prominent Spiritualists. Very few of them have attempted to dispute the fact that fraud exists among mediums; all maintain, however, that it is not universal.

I have been told that our inquiry has extended to the wrong cases, and I have had hurled at me, *ad nauseam*, the time-worn Spiritualist argument, that just as wigs do not disprove the existence of real heads of hair, and false five-pound notes the existence of genuine ones, so fraudulent phenomena do not disprove the existence of real ones.

Often this argument has been carried a step further, and it has been held that as neither wigs nor false notes would exist were it not for the existence of the real articles, neither could fraudulent phenomena occur without genuine prototypes. This argument is not related, even distantly, to logic or common sense. Its fallacy lies in the fact that men with real hair do not wear wigs; nor do those with real five-pound notes in their pocket-books run the risk of forging false ones.

And, after all, the proof of this pudding, as of others, is in the eating. To all critics I have made one reply: "Produce one genuine medium, let us investigate his phenomena under proper conditions, and, if we find them honest, we will proclaim the fact from the house-tops."

This tempting offer usually closed the correspondence; or brought the reply that it was not incumbent on Spiritualists to convert

unbelievers. But not in every case. The name of one medium was communicated to me by several people who believed him to be able to produce genuine phenomena. I was—and am still—ready to give him every opportunity of establishing that belief as a fact. I therefore addressed the following letter to him:

March 10th, 1910.

To Mr. C. HUSK,
30 South Grove,
Rye Lane, Peckham.

DEAR SIR,

Your name has been communicated to me by several Spiritualists, who are anxious that we should see your materializations of spirit forms.

Would you be willing to hold a test séance in order that these phenomena may be investigated by a competent committee?

I am,
Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR.

To this I received a reply *by wire* the following day:

Too ill to accept your offer, will write you.

HUSK.

As the promised letter did not arrive, I wrote again, expressing the hope that when he had sufficiently recovered he would see his way to arrange the séance. To this letter I have, after the lapse of three weeks and up to the eve of going to press with this number, received no reply.

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that the only medium to whom Spiritualists care to pin their faith should be unable to grasp the opportunity of establishing his reputation on a peculiarly sound basis.

The following facts may throw some light, in the judgment of unbiassed persons, on his reluctance to come forward.

His phenomena are invariably produced in an absolutely dark room.

Two members of his household usually (and probably invariably) sit with him; one is always seated at his side.

One of his sésances was recently broken up owing to the presence of sitters with electric flash lamps, who turned them on to the medium and detected him in the act of "helping the spirits" by "making up" in the semblance of a spirit-form.

Further I have received the following circumstantial account of Husk's procedure from one who recently sat with him :

I was present with a friend some weeks ago at a séance held by a medium named Husk, who lives at Peckham. The séance was fixed for three, but it began very late, owing to the non-arrival of some expected sitters. We finally went into the séance room about four. The windows were heavily curtained, and the only light was a candle. The medium was standing just inside the door, dressed, I fancy, in a black frock-coat. After speaking to him for a moment, we sat round a table, at which the medium also took his place. We were told to link fingers, in order to "complete the circuit" then the candle was put out, and, after a minute or two, we were told that the medium had gone into a trance. Soon voices were heard in different parts of the room. I had noticed that the medium had a cold; the spirits seemed all to be similarly affected, and neither I nor my friend had the slightest doubt that the voices were due to ventriloquism.

I ought to mention that the medium had seated on his right an elderly man, who directed the proceedings and explained to us what was happening. He was obviously a confederate, and there was also a young woman—possibly Husk's daughter, and certainly living in the house—seated next but one to the medium on his left. Various spirits talked, including one named John King, Cardinal Manning, and Joey (who, we were told, was Grimaldi, the famous clown). This last made a number of exceedingly pointless jokes. After a time the materialising began.

It was perfectly obvious to me, though I had never been to any séance before, that the spirit-forms—or, rather, spirit-faces—which were made visible in the dark room by the glow reflected from a slate painted with luminous paint, were simply the medium's face, made up with an assortment of beards, moustaches, and, I think, masks. The whole affair would have been simply funny had it not been for the note of tragedy introduced when two of the sitters thought that they recognised, in the dimly-seen phantom-faces, those of departed relatives. They were strongly encouraged to do this by the spirit-voices. As a matter of fact, the faces were so indistinct that it was often impossible to tell whether they were meant to be men or

women. About a dozen spirits appeared in all. The other phenomena consisted of a musical-box that swung round the table, playing tinkling tunes over our heads, and a small luminous cross that strayed about in the air. There was a large musical-box on the table that played a good part of the time, as we were told that the vibrations caused by the music would help the spirits to "materialise." Without this information I might have thought it was there for the purpose of covering any noise the medium might make while producing the "phenomena." When the musical-box was not playing, we were asked to sing hymns, and the company sang "Abide with Me" and "Lead, Kindly Light," with great fervour. The latter seemed particularly appropriate.

The séance lasted over two hours, and might have lasted four had not I, by that time thoroughly tired of the wretched business, inquired audibly of my neighbour how the time was going. An obliging spirit immediately asked if any of us had trains to catch. Several sitters answered in the affirmative, and, after some noisy contortions on the part of the medium, we were told that he had come out of his "trance," and the lights were turned up. We then paid our money—five shillings a head—and left.

Husk usually holds, I believe, two sésances a week, on Sundays and Wednesdays, at three o'clock. I believe he is more or less blind, which, perhaps, accounts for the facility with which he can work in the dark.

Can anyone doubt, in view of this statement, that this medium is precisely on a par with all those whom we have already characterised as arrant humbugs? He succeeds in imposing, week by week, on credulous people, by methods in comparison with which the three-card trick is open and above-board; and he has been living on their credulity for years. The law is not tender toward the three-card trickster. Why should his brother-cheat escape?

* * * * *

The attitude adopted by Spiritualists in general towards our inquiry is faithfully reflected in a letter I have received from Sir Oliver Lodge. He says :

The more the general public are made acquainted with the various fraudulent devices used by certain professional sham mediums the better. Many of these devices are known to the leading members of the Society of Psychical Research, who have taken their due share in exposing and denouncing fraud.

With this sentiment I am, of course, heartily in agreement; but unfortunately it is the tendency of many Spiritualists to accept

as genuine all phenomena in which they themselves cannot at once detect the trick. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this idea applies when a medium, who has already been proved fraudulent, hits on a new device which, for a time at any rate, escapes detection. His new phenomena are accepted as genuine, until the truth is discovered. By that time he will, in all probability, have invented a new one.

No more ludicrous illustration of this could be adduced than the case of the medium, Charles Bailey, whom a prominent Spiritualist has recently exposed. A much fuller account of it than I propose to give was contained in *Light*, the Spiritualist journal, for March 12th.

The opening paragraph of the paper refers to the inquiry set on foot by PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, and takes the line that it at any rate shows that popular interest in the subject is increasing.

The second paragraph passes on to the mention of the exposure of Bailey—"a much more serious matter." Professor Reichel paid the expenses from Australia to Europe of Bailey and a companion, *without whom this medium never travels*. His object was to hold séances under test conditions in order that Bailey's genuineness, in which he believed, might be conclusively proved. In the number of *Light* of which we are speaking, Professor Reichel's account of the result appears. He describes how Bailey produced at one of the test séances, held at Grenoble, two birds, which he declared had been brought from India by his "Spirit Controls"; and follows this with the statement that next day it was established, beyond possibility of doubt, that Bailey had bought these birds from a dealer in the town, who identified, not only the birds, but the purchaser.

And what next? In the face of this fiasco—which had cost him at least £200—Professor Reichel writes to Bailey:

Your deceptive mode of proceeding is all the more repugnant, as I am fully convinced that you are capable of producing genuine phenomena.

That is to say, he still refused to believe that Bailey had deceived him before, and maintained his faith in his power to produce genuine manifestations.

All credit is due both to Professor Reichel and to *Light* for frankly stating facts so

manifestly against themselves; but the following important point must not be overlooked.

Bailey, although searched—not very satisfactorily, it would seem—by the committee, succeeded in getting the birds into the séance room undetected; one is forced to the conclusion that, if he had displayed only a little more circumspection in buying them, he would never have been detected at all, and we should have seen again, what unfortunately we have often seen before, a committee of apparently competent investigators vouching for the genuineness of fraudulent phenomena, simply because the medium was too clever—or too cunning—for them.

Professor Reichel, in his letter to Bailey, informs him that he will pay his fare back to Melbourne, and adds:

I can only recommend you to leave Europe as quickly as possible, for any sittings at which money was taken would probably bring you into conflict with the authorities.

One or two "conflicts" between the authorities and the mediums, who seem to consider themselves licensed to make a living by such shady tricks as we have exposed, would do excellent service in stimulating the dormant common sense of the large number of excellent people they are at present deluding.

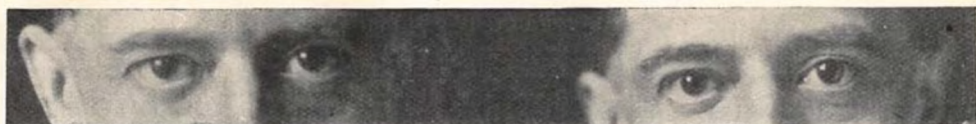
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Our inquiry last month dealt with Spirit Messages; I shall have an opportunity in the June number of dealing with criticisms and correspondence concerning it.

This month we deal with an important development of Spiritualism—Spirit-healing.

Under this broad title we treat the psychic, mental, and magnetic healers, who profess to destroy disease by means of "magnetism," "health thought," and "spirit influence."

Our inquiry into their methods, the results of which are detailed in the following pages, goes to prove that the magnetic healers, who advertise themselves as curing disease "under spirit control," are frauds pure and simple; while the drugless healers, mental healers, and Christian Science practitioners, though a few may occasionally have had some success in the treatment of purely nervous afflictions, are absolutely incapable of taking the place of the qualified medical man.



The Magnetic Eye and the Hypnotic Eye. It is partly by virtue of the power of their gaze that mental and magnetic healers profess to effect their cures. The difference between the "Hypnotic" and "Magnetic" expressions is merely in degree of intensity: and any effect gained by so-called Magnetic Healers is purely due to hypnotic suggestion.

III.—HEALERS WHO DO NOT HEAL.

An inquiry into the methods of "Clairvoyant Diagnostors" and "Magnetic Healers." How they get their patients. Absent treatment—what it professes to do, and what it does.

By WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

(Illustrated with photographs specially taken by Mr. E. H. Mills.)

SPIRIT HEALERS.

To cure disease, not only without the use of drugs or surgery, but also without any previous medical education or knowledge—these, briefly, are the claims of the spirit healers. You may see every week in the spiritualist papers the various descriptions under which they advertise themselves—as "spiritual healers," "mental healers," "magnetic healers under spirit control," "clairvoyant diagnostors of diseases," and so on. On a single advertisement page of the best-known spiritualist weekly, out of thirty-five advertisements seventeen were inserted by healers of various kinds. These represent a mere fraction of those at present in practice in this country, and the question which arises is, Have these people discovered or developed some remarkable power, which, though overlooked by scientific men, enables them to work miracles? Or are they, on the other hand, to be classed with the mediums who produce trick materialisations of spirit forms and spurious messages from the dead, and all the other charlatans exposed in previous articles?

"CLAIRVOYANT" DIAGNOSERS OF DISEASE.

Before disease can be cured, it must be diagnosed. First of all, then, what are the methods of the "Clairvoyant diagnostors"? I have recently submitted myself to several of the best-known practitioners in this line of business; with what results I will now describe.

Several of their attempts were abortive,

among them the first. I attended at the address of a healer named J. J. Vango, and an attendant answered the door, showed me into the drawing-room, asked my name, and divested me of my overcoat, which he took into the hall.

Presently the clairvoyant appeared. He seemed to be in a highly nervous state, and in all modesty I cannot help suspecting that, whatever his subsequent success in diagnosing my symptoms, he had readily succeeded in diagnosing my card as that of a man who had an unpleasant thirst for information, and a habit of publishing his discoveries in print.

However, he agreed to give me a sitting, and asked for something I was in the habit of carrying about with me. I gave him a small pair of scissors in a case. He felt them through the covering, but could evidently not make out what they were. Accordingly, under cover of putting coal on the fire, he opened the case to find out. Then, still in a state of nervousness, he asked me several questions of the style that is generally described as "fishing."

Had I had any severe illness lately? The weather was trying for those with weak lungs, was it not? How very prevalent influenza was. But a clairvoyant diagnosis I had come for, and that I meant to have. I certainly did not intend to tell the man who was to provide it all I knew about my own health, which was obviously what he wanted. Accordingly, I made my answers absolutely non-committal. The diagnoser was nonplussed, and, after sitting for a few minutes with the

scissors on his forehead, he announced that he could "get nothing," and was therefore unable to give me a reading.

Disappointed, I went off to another practitioner—Ronald Brailey by name. The door was opened by a young lady, who told me that the psychic was within, but engaged. Would I call again at four? I made the appointment to do so, and returned at the appointed hour. I found him still engaged and a motor standing at the door. However, I said I would wait. In about fifteen minutes, the practitioner, a dapper little man, came up, and asked me what I wanted. I told him a medical diagnosis. "That," he said, "will take twenty minutes. There is another gentleman waiting to see me, but as he will take half-an-hour he had better wait."

We went down to the drawing-room, where he spent some minutes in examining me carefully under cover of a little very small talk, then retired to cleanse his hands. Returning, he asked for my left glove. Turning this inside out he placed it on his forehead and proceeded to tell me:

"I sense a congested condition of the stomach and intestines. This may cause indigestion. The liver is also congested, so is the spleen. There is congestion of the heart and of the lungs. I see no disease, but your organs are functioning badly. There is a great loss of vitality. You would like to do a great deal, but you feel you simply can't. You sit down wishing you could do a thing and you find you simply can't, can't, can't. How far am I right?"

"I am afraid you are not very near the mark," I said.

"Well, that is all I get, organs functioning badly, no disease, great loss of vitality. There is nothing the matter with you that any doctor or medicine can cure, but you will derive great benefit from Magnetic Treatment."

"Do you sense any pain or anything that will cause pain?"

"No, nothing at all, except the condition of your stomach which I have described."

"By that you mean stomach-ache or colic?"

"Yes, nothing else but that."

He then woke up and recapitulated all he had told me in trance. He again suggested a Magnetic Healer. He was not himself now doing this work, he told me, as he found it was too exhausting. Thinking probably that he had not given me enough for my money—his fee is half a guinea—he asked me my birth date. I told him, and he made some calculations.

"The mystery of numbers," he said, "has been revealed to me and I find that your lucky number is six. Six years ago a change came into your life, and six years before that there was also a change. You have a very secretive nature. You are difficult to understand. Your mind is not easily moved. You have a great faculty for always coming out on top. In good things you are naturally on the top, but when things go wrong you still come out on top. I see a long life, sixty-five or seventy at least. So you can have no disease." Then, quite inconsequently, "Your only trouble is the loss of vitality. You should have Magnetic Treatment."

"All right," I said, "I'll try it and see if it is any use."

"I don't like that expression," excitedly; "it is of use, it will be of use to you. As you made the remark I felt someone pushing me and saying, 'Tell him it will do him good and he must have it.'"

"Well, what is Magnetic Treatment?" I asked.

"You remember when the woman touched the hem of His garment the Lord said, 'Someone has touched Me, for I feel virtue has gone out of Me.' Magnetic Treatment is just that. The magnetiser has certain virtue which he can impart to the patient. It is not all his own, only about a tenth is his, the remaining nine-tenths are supplied by the spirits helping and working through him."

"What can it do?"

"Everything. When I first got the light I was upstairs in my room. I suddenly felt I had this power and that I must make use of it. I went downstairs to my sister, who had a large ulcer on her neck. Laying my hand on this, I said, 'Be healed,' and sure enough the next morning when she came down the ulcer had entirely disappeared; there was no sign of it to be seen."

There are three points specially to be noted about this interview—excluding the profane pretensions of this ridiculous person.

First, the diagnosis itself. It is absolutely colourless; its terms might be safely applied to nine men out of every ten who lived a more or less sedentary life. Besides being inaccurate in several minor details, it told me nothing I did not know, and, moreover, told me considerably *less* than a doctor actually did later, given only the same chance of gaining information.

Secondly, the repeated mention of Magnetic Treatment. Precisely what that treatment is I shall show a little later, but the point I want to bring out now is that the clairvoyant diagnosticians, even when they do not themselves practise Magnetic Healing, invariably recommend it. The reason is simple. By sending patients to the Magnetic Healers they in turn receive patients from them. The benefit is mutual.

Thirdly, the miraculous cure of the ulcer. It is an almost invariable practice of all mediums—whether their business is healing or producing spirit forms or messages—to tell their sitters of some much more wonderful phenomenon brought about by them *on a former occasion*. The tangible miracles occur every other day—in the Alice-In-Wonderland sense—*i.e.*, yesterday and to-morrow, but never to-day.

Another "psychic surgery" recently visited was conducted by a man and his wife, a Mr. and Mrs. Irving. My ring was answered by the man in person. After a little palaver a sitting was granted and I was admitted to the drawing-room. Here I was engaged in conversation for some minutes by the man who was examining me carefully, and "fishing." He then went out of the room to get a spirit photograph he



The method of the "clairvoyant diagnoser" is to sit opposite his patient, holding some thing usually worn by him on his own forehead. He then claims to be able to describe accurately the patient's physical condition, and to prescribe for any ailment or disease he may be suffering from. How this works in actual practice is fully described in the article.

wished to show me, and, shortly after he returned, his wife came in. A few more minutes' apparently desultory conversation and the sitting began.

I was as usual asked for some object I was in the habit of carrying about with me, and I gave again the little pair of scissors in their case.

The medium closed her eyes, made a few passes over her brow, and became "entranced." Her breathing quickened, some sighs and groans were emitted; then she asked:

"Are you a doctor or a medical student?"

"I am not."

"I ask because I see you surrounded by doctors and you are all talking. I see a bench, a sort of work-table, and there are bottles, lots of bottles. You are bending over these evidently making experiments. You are engaged in research work, something in the way of chemicals."

The husband: "Is that correct, are you occupied in that way?"

"I am not, but I am an amateur photographer."

The husband: "Ah, that must be it; she evidently sees you doing photographic work."

"The vision is very confused. I cannot

see clearly. There are clouds like a mist fogging your brain." The clairvoyant now got into a very depressed state and sobbed.

She also talked gibberish in which what sounded like "Jess see kar" was constantly repeated. "Your heart is not strong, there is not disease but want of strength. Your lungs are not quite right. Your stomach is out of order, so is your liver. You may have a weak digestion. But there is nothing wrong." More sobs and distress. "Tell ze gentleman, oh what I want to say. He no understand. Make him see. Ze you know, how I can tell?" and a lot more in a similar strain and in a simulated childish voice. In her natural voice. "You are suffering from a want of vitality. You want rousing. I feel," with animation, "oh, I feel I would like to get up and shake you."

"Please do so if it will help you at all."

More sobs and distress. Then getting up the medium went to her husband and began fingering him all over, talking gibberish the while. When she got her face near his ear I distinctly heard in imploring tones, "Make him speak, make him speak."

Thinking the farce had gone on long enough I brought matters to a head by asking, "Do you sense any pain or anything likely to cause pain?"

"I sense no pain, nothing that could cause any. You are highly strung and nervous, that is all, but there is no pain."

As a matter of fact, I am a very gouty subject, and a great sufferer in this respect. I was so suffering at the time, but naturally was not advertising the fact.

"Do you think I ought to follow the course I contemplate?"

"You mean an operation? (I gave no sign.) No, certainly not. No operation will do you any good. You want to avoid depressing subjects. You must mix with congenial companions. Your vitality is being sapped, drained away from you. Mix with people who have vitality to spare and get some of it."

The husband: "You have often been under chloroform, I suppose? This will account for the sensation of cloudiness."

(I have never had chloroform in my life.

Nor any other anæsthetic. I was not thinking of any operation.)

The husband: "I cannot understand my wife's depressed state. You are of a cheerful disposition, and so is my wife. Probably you are worrying over the thought of the operation, and that has depressed you."

(No operation being contemplated, this was a little wide of the mark.)

The clairvoyant: "Yes, that is it. He is depressed. He sleeps badly. He is a victim of insomnia. He has no concentration. His mind wanders."

The husband: "Do you suffer from insomnia?"

"I do not." (I am a good and healthy sleeper.)

The husband: "My dear, he seems to me to have great concentration. I was observing him when he was examining the photograph."

The clairvoyant: "You don't understand what I mean. His mind wanders, and his spirit is never at rest. He has great concentration, so great, that when he is thinking he liberates his spirit, which leaves his body. He has great control, so that this is not noticeable to ordinary people. He is a powerful psychic."

I had already been told that though my heart was not strong, my lungs not quite right, my stomach out of order, also my liver, yet there was nothing wrong.

Now I was seriously informed that my power of concentration was so great that I could not concentrate.

I waited to hear no more.

THE PSYCHO-THERAPEUTIC SOCIETY.

Before leaving the clairvoyant diagnosticians, mention must be made of the Psycho-Therapeutic Society, which has its offices and a sort of hospital at 3 Bayley Street, Bedford Square. The objects of the Society are ostensibly the "Study, Investigation, and Practice of Medical Hypnotism, Suggestive Therapeutics, Curative Human Radiations, and Drugless Healing." Among its vice-presidents are to be found Drs. Bell, Stenson Hooker, Jolliffe, Peebles, and Forbes Winslow, as well as Messrs. Deane, Pugh, and Withinshaw, who are members of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Among the objects of the society are the study of medical hypnotism and suggestion. These are recognised by all medical men, and the value of the latter certainly is known and made use of by every doctor. It has, of course, very rigidly defined limitations, but within those it can be used with advantage, and it is certainly a good thing that it should be studied.

But clairvoyant diagnosis is also practised, and it is here that I cross swords with the society. The president, Mr. George Spriggs, gives clairvoyant diagnoses, making no charge for them, and I am bound to say that he seems to believe he has abnormal powers. But can this assumption be based on any logical reasoning? The position is, after all, a very simple one. The ordinary medical man gets an idea of what the patient is suffering from by a more or less lengthy course of examination and questioning. The clairvoyant, theoretically, sees the whole human organism laid bare, and only has to describe the appearance of the organ so that the medical man can know what to do. The truth of the existence of this power can be proved beyond refutation very quickly. Let a clairvoyant be taken to the operating wards of any hospital. Let him be led, blindfolded, to as many bedsides as he cares to visit, and let him describe the patients' condition.

If the man has undergone an operation the correctness of his vision can be at once attested. If not, we have only to wait till the operation is over—a matter of a few hours, or at most a day or two—to have the clairvoyant proved right or wrong. This has not been done, and until it is we can, I think, with safety assert that there is nothing in the business.

The following are the main points of Mr. George Spriggs' clairvoyant diagnosis of myself:

Blood free from disease—circulation fair.
Nerves not well nourished—no organic disease in nervous system.
Brain quite sound. Base of brain and upper spine fair.
Eyes, a weakness—one in particular. Don't overstrain sight.
Nostrils, no obstruction.
Throat and glands not very strong.

Lungs, fair.
Liver, no disease.
Stomach, digestive powers, not overstrong; no ulceration.
Heart, sound.
Spleen, healthy.
Kidneys, both weak—affects lower spine, but no organic disease.
No disease in your system. Fairly healthy.
Only weakness in kidneys and stomach.
Brain needs rest—is overtaxed.

The same criticism applies to this as to the diagnoses quoted before. It is entirely negative, and misses the one thing that happened to be wrong with me.

I went straight from the Psycho-Therapeutic Institute to a medical man of repute who did not know me, and asked him if he would "diagnose" me without asking any questions or making any examination. It was an unusual request, so I had to explain that I was not there to make a fool of him, and that if he would do as I asked I would tell him exactly what I was driving at. The only cue I gave him was that the diagnosis should be on the lines of the advertisement of a patent medicine, as all clairvoyant diagnoses are.

He had a good look at me and said:

"Your brain is all right. There is nothing the matter with that, nor with your eyes. You have been looking me straight in the face without moving. Your lungs are not suffering in any way from disease, nor is your heart affected. Your circulation is not very robust. You would be better for more exercise. Your digestion is not too good. Your liver is sluggish, but there is no disease. Your spleen is all right. There is no disease of either your bones or muscles. I would not like to exclude gout or rheumatism, as you may suffer from some such pains. But generally you are healthy. You are not perfectly well, but, then, no one is after a certain age."

Now I ask the reader to compare this diagnosis, obtained by an ordinary man using his powers of observation, and not pretending to anything occult, and, more than that, doing a particular thing for the first time in his life in that way. He will be bound to admit that I got a great deal more than I did from the clairvoyants. All the psychics assured me that there was neither pain nor indication thereof. The man of science sees that there are indications—

indications which would have become a certainty if he had examined me in the usual way.

MAGNETIC HEALING.

What of the Magnetic Treatment so invariably recommended by the clairvoyant diagnosis?

Its effects are due, so the Healer will tell you, to Human Curative Radiations and Mental Magnetism. These powers, properties, or whatever they should be called, are supposed to be highly developed in certain persons, who thereupon become Magnetic Healers. Spiritualists claim that this healing virtue is due mainly to spirit influence, the Human Healer being merely the medium for their ministrations.

Not all Magnetic Healers, however, subscribe to this theory, and the text-book on Magnetic Healing, published by the Psychic Research Company of Chicago and London, makes no mention of any spirit agency.

At the same time, Magnetic Healers undoubtedly draw most of their patients from among the believers in Spiritualism, and it is natural, therefore, that they should not be anxious to disclaim "spirit control."

In what exactly does Magnetic Healing consist?

I have submitted myself for treatment during the last few months to a number of Magnetic Healers. On some occasions I have been suffering from some definite pain or ailment, at others I have been merely feeling as if I needed a tonic. For this latter state Magnetic Healing is alleged to be the surest cure; and in all cases the practitioners have assured me that they could and would benefit me.

I have selected from my notes two typical treatments by Magnetic Healers. Both are persons practising at present.

The following letter appeared recently in *Light*. It was signed by a Mr. C. Brown, of Kingston-on-Thames:

About a year ago you published a letter from me intimating that I was willing to give healing treatment to sufferers free of charge. Permit me to say that I am still able and willing to do this. Although I give about forty treatments every week, I have not yet had to treat any person twice for gout, sciatica, lumbago, carbuncle, sprains, etc.

Here, thought I, is a case worth investi-

gating. The fact that no charge was made spoke well for the *bona fides* of the writer. And so I visited him. I was received by a kindly, elderly man.

"What is it you complain of?" he asked.

"My trouble is chiefly a depressed feeling," I said. "I have been told that I require vitalising."

Taking both my hands in his, one in each hand, he held them so for some minutes in silence, then asked:

"Do you feel anything?"

I was obliged to confess I did not.

"That is strange, because people generally begin to feel my magnetism at once. It is of the purest kind. Why, the other day a lady felt it when I was right away from her at the other end of the room. But she was a psychic."

He then made various passes over my head and body, both back and front, finally telling me that I was now much better, that I did not require anything further, and that I would feel the benefit in a little time.

As a matter of fact, I had felt absolutely nothing except the breeze he made when making the passes, and his hand when he touched me.

I then remarked that I understood that growths, enlargements, and swellings were very amenable to treatment.

"Certainly, and I have been most successful in such cases. I have removed tumours and growths of all kinds."

"I am glad to hear that, as perhaps you can remove or reduce the enlargement of my big toe joint."

"Well, I am afraid I cannot do that, as the substance of bone is so solid."

Nevertheless, he magnetised the offending member, by placing his hand on and making passes down my leg, and over my boot. Needless to add, without the smallest effect.

All the time the treatment had been going on we had kept up a conversation on spirit matters, from which I gathered that his healing power was mainly due to three Indian Controls, though, as a matter of fact, he had a band of fifty from whom he drew his power.

This interview was to me, as I think it would have been to any investigator, convincing proof that this particular Magnetic

Healer was, though possibly fully convinced of his own powers, nevertheless a quack. If he is foolish enough to believe that his absurd ministrations can have any healing effects, it makes him all the more dangerous to those who are foolish enough to consult him.

Of an entirely different type was the practitioner whose treatment I am now about to describe.

Mr. A. Rex is, I believe, generally held by Spiritualists to be the best Magnetic Healer practising, and he attends frequently at the offices of the London Spiritualist Alliance to minister to its members.

The following was the method in which he treated me for lack of vitality.

Laying me full length on a reclining chair, he first took my hands in his, and held them for a few moments. He then made several long passes over me, and commenced a thorough massage. He covered almost my entire body, and this part of the treatment continued for quite half-an-hour. He is an excellent masseur, and I need hardly point out that during the massage he has exceptional facilities for making what is practically a medical examination of his patient.

All this time he was talking about Spiritualism and Magnetic Healing generally, explaining to me that his power was due to his Indian Controls, which seem almost invariably to be invoked by Magnetic Healers. Presently he said:

"You respond well to my treatment. You would not respond like that to everyone. When I first started I did not think I could do anything with you. But you have a lot of sympathy. I know you will go home and think the whole thing out. You have a very clear brain, and will not easily come to a conclusion. But I should advise you to have half-a-dozen treatments, and I will do my best for you. I cannot guarantee you a cure, but I will do my best. You see I have to be cautious. We healers are not understood. I don't give prescriptions. I don't believe in running my head against a brick wall."

All things considered, this man is not in the same class as most of the others I have consulted. By this I do not mean to say that there is anything in his psychic pretensions. But I do wish to be fair. The man



A most important factor in Magnetic Treatment is the "Long Pass." The Magnetic Healer stands in the position shown in front of his patient—



—brings his arms slowly down in front of the patient's body, and directs the full force of his "magnetic power" upon him.



Then he draws his arms violently backwards. The claim of Magnetic Healers is that this process drags any pain or disease out of the patient's body.



Magnetic Treatment for Lumbago. The healer professes to pass his own magnetism through the patient's body by means of contact with his hands. As a matter of fact, any possible benefit obtained by this treatment is due to the massage of which some Healers make a special feature.

is a good masseur, and, under proper medical direction, could fulfil a useful function.

The theory of the psychic influence will not hold water for a moment.

THE GUIDE TO MAGNETIC HEALING.

Further illumination is thrown on the subject of Magnetic Healing, by the textbook already mentioned. It is a pamphlet of 54 pages, and purports to be a complete guide to the healing of all diseases, and on its teaching the methods of all Magnetic Healers are based.

Its definition of Magnetic Healing is "that system of treatment by which Life Energy is transferred by the healer to the patient." This Life Energy is the mental magnetism I have referred to, and the pamphlet goes on to explain that Magnetism and Healing are absolutely distinct and separate sciences, because, it says, the former acts directly upon the nerve centres, the latter on the brain, whence the



"Insufflation" is another form of Magnetic Treatment. The Healer places a piece of paper or flannel on the spot where pain is felt, and then breathes upon it. It is claimed that this affords sure relief to such pains as headache, neuralgia, rheumatism, etc!

influence is distributed to the nerve centres. Every human being, the pamphlet declares, has the healing power. To become a healer, all one has to do is to read this pamphlet, follow its exceedingly simple directions, work the miracles, and pocket the fees.

This is how to set about it.

First of all, "General" treatment must precede specific treatment for any particular complaint.

The *modus operandi* of the "General" treatment is as follows:

THE APPLICATION OF MAGNETIC HEALING: A GENERAL TREATMENT.—You must first learn what is meant by giving a general treatment, which must precede the specific treatment for the different diseases which will be mentioned hereafter. Remember that this general treatment, whether you take a case for one treatment only or for daily treatment for a month, you must always begin work by giving this general treatment, proceeding from this to the specific treatment for the particular disease you are called upon to treat. Having questioned your patient first as to his symptoms and habits of life, paying particular attention as to whether he is suffering from constipation among other things, proceed to rub the hands briskly together and obtain the feeling of heat and warmth in the palms and fingers concerning which you have already been instructed. Now, if your patient can

come to see you, it is very evident that he can sit up in a chair (*note this acute piece of reasoning*), and you therefore will dispose him comfortably in a chair in which the back is slightly off the angle of the perpendicular, making him as comfortable as possible. The idea is to make him rest, by which means he will be more thoroughly passive to your influence.

HOLDING THE ATTENTION.—In all your treatments request your patient to close his eyes, and this for two reasons. (1) That there may be less to distract his attention, and (2) That he be not allowed to watch all your methods of procedure and so obtain an insight into your work under cover of receiving treatments himself. This is your own work, and while you are willing to devote it to the benefit of humanity you should not be willing to give free instruction to the curious. Therefore, insist upon it that your patient's eyes shall remain closed

throughout the treatment. Now inform him that you are going to project your magnetism upon him from head to foot for the purpose of putting his nervous system into harmony, and then, while he sits comfortably in his chair with his feet planted firmly upon the floor and his hands resting upon his knees, you begin the use of the long passes.

THE LONG PASS.—Stand in front of your patient and concentrate your mind upon the effect you intend to produce. Say to yourself, "I will relieve this patient of his pain. I will cure him of his disease. I will restore his nervous system to harmony. I will give him freely of my magnetism. I can do this by my knowledge of the law of sympathetic transmission of force." While you are thinking this to yourself, slowly raise both hands, the fingers being clenched, and in a wide sweep raise them above the patient's head, bringing them together and unclashing the fingers, at a point just above his forehead. Now spread your fingers out a little, keeping them easily apart but not rigid, and very slowly bring them down past the forehead, face, chest, abdomen, to the knees, taking a full thirty seconds to complete this slow, longitudinal pass. At the conclusion of the pass shake the hands as if you were throwing off the diseased condition of the patient, and, clenching the fingers again, bring them once more in a wide sweep before the patient's head, and repeat the process. Continue this for five minutes, during which time your patient will be almost certain to feel the stimulating effect of your magnetism.

The pamphlet then goes on to describe the specific treatment for various complaints. Every one of them is based on the following principle.

The healer has in his body a magnetic force, which he can transmit into the body of the patient, and thereby heal him of his disease. The pamphlet tells us that this force must be transmitted into the patient by touching him with the right hand, and drawn out by touching him again with the left. The "current," by means of the right hand, is invariably "passed into the body," just above the *solar plexus*, the big nerve centre situated in the pit of the stomach. But it is drawn out by the left hand at different places varying with the complaint. For headache, it is drawn out at the base of the brain. For asthma, between the shoulder blades. For rheumatism and sciatica, at the spot where pain is felt. For paralysis—for nothing is impossible to Magnetic Treatment—the current must be drawn up and down the spine.

"Insufflation" is another phase of Magnetic Treatment. It consists of breathing upon

the patient, and has the effect of "calming the nerves and clearing the brain." In this connection a timely warning is given to the healer:

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

—Avoid the use of stimulants and tobacco, because anything which makes a disagreeable impression upon your patient counts strongly against your success. A *single disagreeable shock*, such as the odour of onions, is sometimes sufficient to prevent the patient from passing into the condition of nervous harmony which you seek to establish. There should not be the slightest odour of tobacco or alcohol about you; but, on the other hand, some sweet-smelling herb, such as thyme, lavender, or mint, used as a mouth wash, possesses pleasant properties as an indication of cleanliness and care on your part.

ABSENT TREATMENT.

It must not be supposed that it is necessary for the Magnetic Healer actually to see his patient, he can obtain all his curative effects by "absent treatment." This is the manner in which he does it—again quoted from the pamphlet:

HOW TO MAGNETISE OBJECTS.—A very large part of the



The Magnetic Healer claims that he is, as it were, a storage battery of magnetism. By passing this into the body of the patient, and then drawing it out where pain is felt or weakness apparent, he claims to be able to cure. In the photographs is shown the treatment for headache, lumbago, and catarrh.

practice of the Magnetic Healer comes to him through correspondence from patients living at a distance, and it is a matter of great importance to them that they should receive from the healer articles magnetised by his force, which can be applied by them to the seat of pain, or for the cure of chronic conditions. You must understand, therefore, how to magnetise an article so that its curative properties shall be retained for the use of patients at a distance.

PREPARING BLOTTING-PAPER.—One of the best and most easily handled articles for conveying magnetic force to a distance is blotting-paper, and the way to magnetise blotting-paper is as follows:

Take a piece of new blotting-paper about the size of an ordinary envelope, and sprinkle it on both sides with a few drops of water. Now heat your hands very hot by rubbing them together, shaking them, and clapping them with force one against the other, and then hold this blotting-paper between the palms of the hands for two minutes, impressing your concentrated thought upon the article, willing strongly that your magnetism shall be absorbed and retained by it for the benefit of your patient. So proceed with another piece of blotting-paper the same size, and having thus separately magnetised them, place the two pieces together, and hold them together between the palms of your hands for a minute or two. Now wrap them in clean white paper, and post them to your patient, together with a letter giving full directions for use. In curing diseases of long standing, the paper is to be used by wearing it upon the part which it is desired to treat.

IN CASE OF SORES.—If desired for the cure of a sore or ulcer of long standing, a thick piece of cloth should be laid upon the sore, and then the blotting-paper laid over the cloth. It is better that no one but the patient be allowed to handle the blotting paper before it is applied in order that there may be no diminution of magnetism. It is possible to magnetise almost any object, from a ring to a piece of raw potato, so that such objects will have curative properties, but the blotting-paper will be found to answer most purposes.

HOW TO MAGNETISE A GLASS OF WATER.—It very often happens that patients require magnetism in liquid form, and better results, especially in fevers and chronic rheumatism, can be obtained sometimes by the use of magnetised water than by any other agency. Take a glass and fill it with cold water.

Hold the glass in the left hand. Point the fingers of the right hand and the thumb upon the surface of the water at the mouth of the glass, but do not allow the fingers to come into contact with the water. Now direct your attention upon the glass of water, having previously heated your hands to allow the accumulation of nervous energy at the points of the fingers as in the preceding preparation of the blotting-paper. Five minutes' work will magnetise a glassful or a jugful of water, provided care be taken that the vessel containing the water has a wide mouth, and not a narrow neck. The patient should be instructed to take the water in doses of a wineglassful every thirty minutes for the first day; every hour the second day; and a wine-glassful three times a day after this. It is an interesting experiment to set before a patient two glasses of water, one of which has been magnetised, and allow him to distinguish by the slightly metallic taste of the magnetised water which is which.

A very interesting experiment, indeed, I should think!

The following are the instructions to the Magnetic Healer for "Absent Treatment":

The manner in which you are personally to give this treatment is as follows:

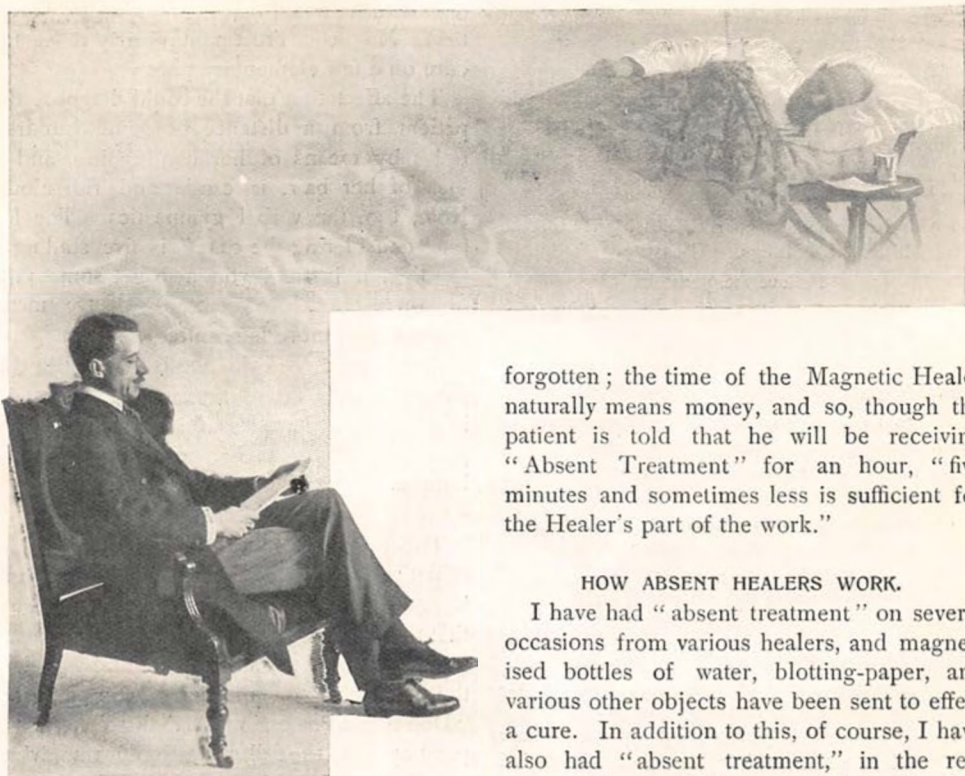
You are to sit in a comfortable chair in a room as much secured from noise and interruption as possible, close the eyes, and hold in your hand the letter of the patient whom you wish to benefit, or hold in your mind the name of the person and his request. Repeat quietly to yourself the name and address of the patient. Go over rapidly in your mind the symptoms of which he complains, and then repeat to yourself this formula or something like it: "This patient complains of sickness.

... I project to him my healing thought, and call upon the power resident in him to meet me in this work of restoring harmony to his system. I cast out disease, which is lack of ease, and bespeak for him health renewed and returning happiness. Let this request be granted. I call upon the Great Power of Good Thought, which is Harmony, which is Universal Health, to aid me to reach this patient, and help him. This is my earnest demand." Repeat again to yourself the name of this patient, and couple with it the talismanic words, "Health," "Happiness," "Harmony," "Peace."

The Thought so projected does, according to my belief, fully reach the patient and is absorbed by his mind. There it expands and works within him, much as yeast ferments in flour and water. It is not necessary that you should give up any length of



"Magnetising" a glass of water. The process shown in the photograph—simply holding the hand, fingers downward, over the glass—is declared by the Magnetic Healing textbook to invest the water with healing virtues, and even to give it "a slight metallic taste!"



Absent Treatment. The figures in this photograph are arranged exactly as in the drawing in the text-book which gives instructions in Magnetic Healing. The theory is that the healer can sit in his own house and merely by reading over a letter from his patient send him his "curative human radiations" and "health thoughts," by which absent healing is supposed to be done.

time to the consideration of each patient unless you particularly wish to do so. The hour's Treatment is for the patient, not for the Healer, this time is allowed the patient in order that the Thought may have time to fix itself fully upon his attention, and, so to speak, work thoroughly into his system. *Five minutes and sometimes less is sufficient for your part of the work.*

Figure to yourself what this means.

If you are ill, and decide to have "Absent Treatment" from one of these persons, you are not only paying substantial fees, but are basing your only hope of cure on the idea that a man who has never seen you, who has no medical knowledge, whose mental calibre is more than problematical, can, by holding a letter written by you in his hands, and repeating a few words, however "Talismanic"—effect the cure. The whole thing is bizarre to the verge of insanity.

Yet notice how the business side is never

forgotten; the time of the Magnetic Healer naturally means money, and so, though the patient is told that he will be receiving "Absent Treatment" for an hour, "five minutes and sometimes less is sufficient for the Healer's part of the work."

HOW ABSENT HEALERS WORK.

I have had "absent treatment" on several occasions from various healers, and magnetised bottles of water, blotting-paper, and various other objects have been sent to effect a cure. In addition to this, of course, I have also had "absent treatment," in the real sense of the word, by means of their "healing thoughts."

Here, however, is the most recent case of "absent treatment" which I have had under my notice. It gives a real insight into the absurd pretensions and fraudulent methods of those who follow this profession.

An address was selected at haphazard from the batch of advertisements which appear weekly in *Light*, and I asked a friend to write, in rather illiterate style, to the medium, who happened to live in Bradford, asking for "absent treatment" for headache. I reproduce the correspondence:

I.

DEAR MADAM,

I have been told that you can cure pains by magnetism. I have very bad headaches, and a friend of mine told me you could cure them by sending me some magnetism.

If you can cure my head I shall be very grateful, and, if you tell me the money, I will send it. If you can cure the headaches, please send me your magnetism quickly.

Yours obediently,

C. MATTHEWS.

II.

To Mrs. Matthews.

DEAR MADAM,

I give mental and magnetic treatment. Should you desire to place yourself under my treatment, I will do my very best for you. I shall require a very small piece of your hair, also the date of your birth.

I will then consider your case. My fee for the same will be five shillings.

Believe me, yours truly,

J. BURCHELL.

III.

DEAR MADAM,

In reply to your letter, I send you some of my hair and a postal order for five shillings.

My head was bad yesterday; I hope your magnetic treatment will cure it.

I was born on February 7th, 1886.

Yours obediently,

(Miss) C. MATTHEWS.

IV.

MY DEAR MADAM,

You are an exceedingly fine, sensitive, refined, affectionately disposed person.

One who frequently takes upon herself other people's influences and thought-waves. Your mind seems always active; you must be constantly thinking, building, and planning. Even when you go to bed you are planning what shall be done to-morrow. Many times you cannot drop into sleep because you are thinking of all sorts of things.

You are, however, much too self-conscious, and you keep thinking about what other people will think or say.

You are very delicate in your construction. At the present time your blood is very poor, and your circulation also poor. (Here follows a long list of ailments, by none of which the patient was in the least affected.)

The letter went on:

I am sending you one box stomach pills. Will you take two every night, two nerve pills every morning, and two indigestion or heart pills every midday? I will also give you mental treatment, every day twice, until you are better. I shall require a small photograph of you, if you possess one, and five shillings for time, if you wish for my treatment.

You may ask me any question you like.

May God's holy angels guide and heal you, and may you very soon feel better than you have done for a long time.

Accept, dear, all kind and helpful thoughts, and believe me, yours truly,

J. BURCHELL.

It is to be noted that this person, by advertising Magnetic Treatment, clearly relies for cure on a few elementary pills.

The affectation that she could diagnose the patient from a distance of some hundred miles by means of her handwriting, and a lock of her hair, is crude and ridiculous. Note, too, the verbal gymnastics. The fee for "considering the case" is five shillings; for this, it is true, you also get some pills thrown in, but before you receive the treatment, five shillings more is required.

Surely no more evidence is needed in this particular case, at any rate, that the advertiser is a hopeless, heartless fraud, and not even possessed of the saving grace of a sense of humour.

WHERE ARE THE CURES?

The question naturally arises, What class of patients can such a system of Healing as I have described enlist, and how can it cure them when enlisted?

The clue to the answer is to be found in the pamphlet, on the page consisting of "Don'ts for Professional Healers." On the page appears the following significant advice:

Don't take any acute or critical cases unless they are thrust upon you forcibly and voluntarily. The present condition of medical laws in most countries permits physicians to slay their patients by the thousands, but if someone dies on a healer's hands, great is the uproar—from the medical men.

Don't handle contagious diseases, for the same reason.

Don't make your fees too small!!!

It will be readily understood that acute or critical cases are not often thrust upon the Magnetic Healers. Even if the patient himself wishes to consult him his family will generally be strong enough in the hour of real danger to see that proper medical advice is obtained, and, moreover, when such a case does come his way, the Magnetic Healer pays great respect to the sound advice of his guide, and avoids it like poison.

In other words, the Magnetic Healers confine themselves to minor ailments, which Nature herself will cure in nine cases out of ten; to the more or less imaginary diseases of hysterical and neurotic people, who are their most frequent prey; and they will also treat chronic diseases, such as rheumatism, paralysis, and neuralgia.

The Magnetic Healer does no positive harm by his treatment, but he certainly, on occasion, may work a great deal of negative harm by coming between the patient and proper medical advice in the early stages of the disease. These simple facts will show why it is that very seldom does anyone die on the healer's hands.

How do the Magnetic Healers obtain patients if they do not work cures?

To begin with, every one of them will give, if you ask him, chapter and verse for many miracles. These, needless to say, will all come from the neurotic and hysterical class already mentioned. Where testimonials are produced declaring that a Magnetic Healer has cured such a disease as cancer, it must be remembered that the testimonial is not worth the paper it is written on unless it is attested by a doctor's certificate, to say that the patient *was* suffering from cancer and has been cured.

No one disputes that patients are cured of what they are told to be this or some other serious disease by the healer; that is a different thing entirely.

The Magnetic Healer does not, however, minimise the severity of the patient's illness—to the patient—he is only too ready by the use of long words and a hotch potch of medical terms to terrify the ignorant.

AN ATTACK OF POLYSYLLABLES.

An amusing instance of the pompous nonsense which is part of the stock-in-trade of these quacks is to be found in the valuable pamphlet:

There is a certain class of new and abnormal growth which baffle the physician and his armamentarium of drugs, but which yield readily to the application of Magnetic Healing. Such, for

instance, is the excessive development of the *epithelium of the sebaceous follicles in the form of verruca*.

In plain English this means that there is often a good deal of difficulty in removing warts!

Picture the state of mind of the unfortunate servant girl who desires the removal of a wart from her finger, or, for the matter of that, of a corn from her toe, when this ridiculous conglomeration of polysyllables is fired off at her.

Magnetic Healing is on the increase in this country, but we are still a long way behind, or rather in front of, America, the land where quacks chiefly flourish, and the original home of Spiritualism, Magnetic Healing, Christian Science, not to mention the Shakers and a dozen other weird quasi-religious sects.

The recent statement quoted by *Light* puts the number of Magnetic Healers in America at 10,000, this figure being inclusive of other and drugless healers.

However, the eyes of the authorities in the United States are apparently being opened to the fraud by which these people live, and, to quote *Light* again, every week or two someone more or less prominent among the Spiritualists is arrested for practising medicine without a medical permit from the Board of Regents. Further, in many States mediums are not allowed to exercise their gifts of Clairvoyance or Psychometry unless they procure a license, and, even then, they are open to prosecution.

As Magnetic Healing originated in the United States, it is, perhaps, only poetic justice that, as they provided us with the disease, they should also point the way to the cure.

AS WILL BE SEEN FROM THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON PAGES 506-508, THE CHARGES OF FRAUD BROUGHT IN PREVIOUS ARTICLES AGAINST THE MEDIUMS WHO PROFESS TO RECEIVE MESSAGES FROM THE DEAD AND TO PRODUCE VISIBLE FORMS OF PERSONS LONG DECEASED REMAIN UP TO THE PRESENT UNREFUTED. NOT A SINGLE PHENOMENON HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR TEST PURPOSES: NOT ONE MEDIUM HAS COME FORWARD TO PROVE HIS *BONA FIDES*. NEXT MONTH FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE METHODS OF THOSE WHO CLAIM OCCULT POWERS WILL BE DESCRIBED.

Part Four:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 29
Number 174
June 1910

On the Edge of the Unknown.

Our Inquiry into Spiritualism has now extended to three of the most important phases of the subject. First, in the March number, we dealt with the seances at which mediums profess to conjure up in bodily form the spirits of the dead; secondly, with "Spirit-Messages," purporting to be genuine communications from the spirit-world; thirdly, last month, with the "magnetic" and "mental" healers who claim to cure disease "under spirit control." In the following article Mr. Marriott describes his investigations into another important class of "phenomena." Next month I shall sum up the results of our Inquiry hitherto; deal with some of the points raised in the large number of letters I have received from Spiritualists and others; and give also an account of a personal experience of a particularly impudent fraud which I myself encountered in my search for really "genuine" phenomena,—Editor "P. M."

IV.—"PHYSICAL PHENOMENA."

How Scientists are Deceived—Sir William Crookes' Spirit Kiss—An Intoxicated Spirit—The Phenomena of Eusapia Paladino, the Italian Medium—Her Latest Exposure—The Ghost of a Thread.

By WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

(Illustrated with photographs specially taken by Mr. E. H. Mills.)

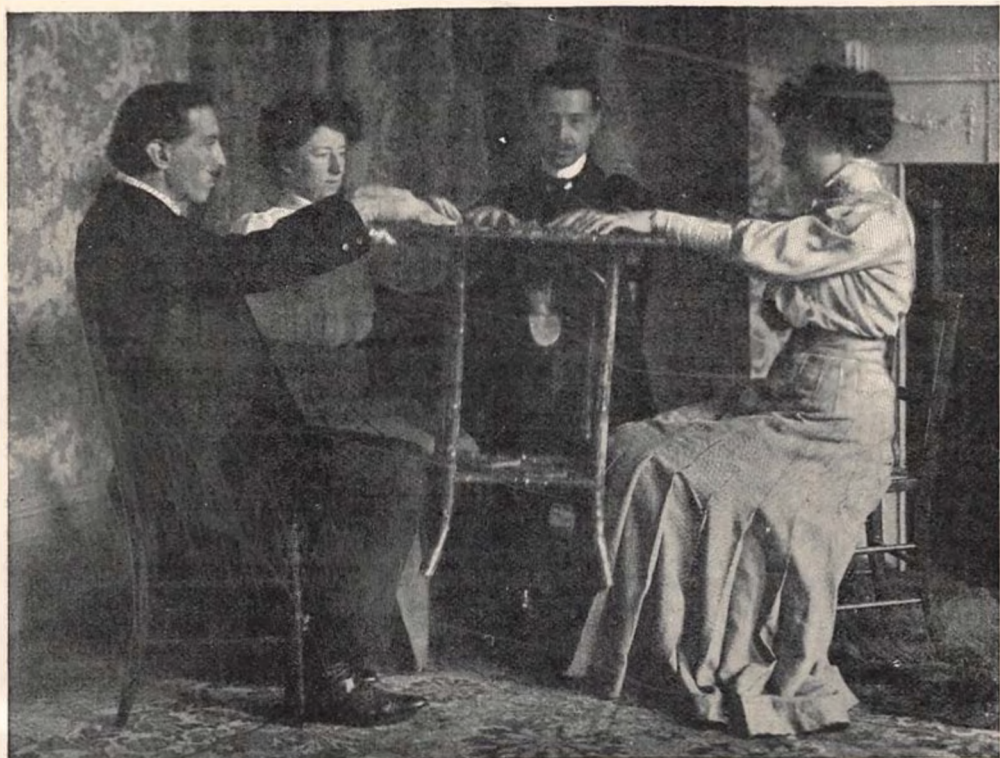
THAT faith will move mountains is a fine figure of speech. Our own experience, however, teaches us that the lighter work of moving chairs and tables is beyond its scope. Perhaps for this reason "physical phenomena"—among them, the moving of concrete objects without apparent physical contact—form the most popular and the most loudly acclaimed scientific "evidence" in favour of Spiritualism.

The library of Spiritualism contains scores of volumes devoted mainly or entirely to accounts of physical manifestations, and among the writers are to be found some distinguished names—Sir William Crookes, Professor Lombroso, and Professor Zollner of Berlin among them. Of this fact I have been gratuitously informed some hundreds of times during the past few weeks by correspondents who not only disagree with my conclusions, but ask me to disbelieve the evidence of my own eyes.

It is perfectly true, of course, that Sir William Crookes was convinced both by Home, a well-known medium, now many years dead, and by Florence Cook, also dead; that Professor Zollner investigated the phenomena

of "Dr." Slade and thoroughly believed them to be genuine; while more recently Professor Lombroso declared many of the phenomena of Eusapia Paladino, the oft-exposed Italian medium, to be above suspicion. It is also true, however, that they were all investigating under conditions more or less unsatisfactory so far as proper observation was concerned; but the great point, and the main point, is this: they did not know how the "phenomena" could have been caused by trickery—in other words, they did not know what to look for.

I say, advisedly, that scientists, however eminent, are emphatically *not* the people to investigate these matters. If Lombroso and Zollner could return again from the dead, and sit, with Sir William Crookes, as a committee to investigate, say, the mysteries worked by Mr. Maskelyne, either on his own ground or on theirs, does anyone suppose that they would detect a single one of his secrets? Spiritualists may think so, but conjurors know better. The scientist who sits where he is told to sit and looks where he is told to look is the ideal subject for the wiles of the conjuror or the medium; and before him effects can be brought off that would be



The "levitation" of a table, or raising it from the ground by invisible means, is one of the miracles on which Spiritualists base their beliefs. Mediums produce this phenomenon in the dark: here it is being done in the light, and the cause of the miracle is apparent in the foot of Mr. Marriott, who is acting as "medium."

impossible before an audience of school-boys.

Sir William Crookes—he was then Professor Crookes—published many years ago an account of his experiments with Home and Florence Cook. The book is now out of print, though copies of it may still occasionally be picked up. With all respect to the author, his investigation of the various phenomena are just about as valuable as those of the average conjuror would be, say, on the Higher Chemistry. Time after time it is made clear that he saw precisely as much as he was meant to see, and missed the salient moment of deception. He saw the phenomena in exactly the same way as the natives of the New World observed the traditional trick of Christopher Columbus in making an egg stand on one end. They believed Columbus was a wizard; Sir William believed, not that Home was a wizard, but, as he prefers to express it, that he was possessed of a, a hitherto unknown force or power.

A SPIRIT KISS.

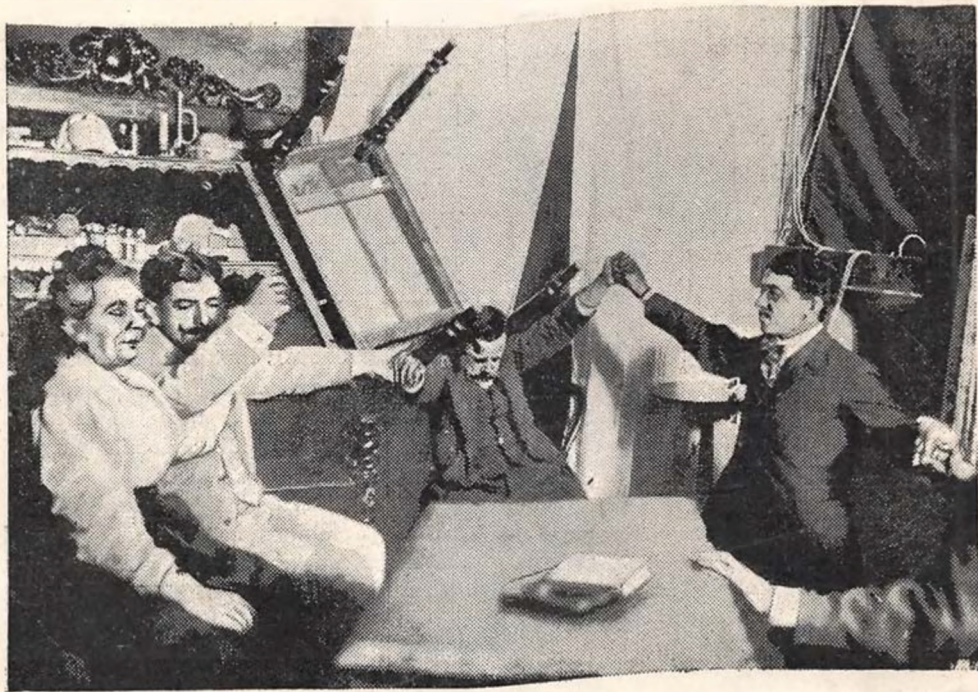
It is not my present purpose to analyse *serialim* the deceptions practised on Sir William Crookes by two mediums, long since dead. Brilliant as he is in investigations where chemical precision and insight only are required, he proved himself totally unable to make any allowance for the human equation.

His experiments with Florence Cook illustrate this fact. They took the shape of "materialising" séances, at which a spirit called Katie King appeared. She was photographed on several occasions, and Sir William Crookes wrote at the time:

But photography is as inadequate to depict the perfect beauty of Katie's face as words are powerless to describe her charms of manner. . . .

And he proceeds to quote:

Round her she made an atmosphere of life;
The very air seemed lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft, and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.



Reproduced by permission of "Light" and the "Annales des Sciences Psychiques."

A "genuine" spirit manifestation. This flashlight photograph was taken at an actual seance, and though it clearly shows the medium supporting the table on his back against the wall, it is acclaimed as evidence of spirit intervention. The table in the air originally stood between the medium and the larger table on the ground. There are several methods in which this "levitation" can be produced—it is usually done by raising the table high into the air with the foot and then getting the head and shoulders beneath it.

In view of this panegyric, one cannot be surprised at the following naïve account of a wonderful séance, found absolutely convincing by Sir William Crookes, who wrote as follows :

I pass on to a séance held last night at Hackney. Katie never appeared to greater perfection, and for nearly two hours she walked about the room, conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm when walking, and the impression conveyed to my mind that it was a living woman by my side, instead of a visitor from the other world, was so strong that the temptation to repeat a certain celebrated experiment became almost irresistible.

(This refers to an occasion on which a sitter had embraced a "spirit.")

Feeling, however, that if I had not a spirit (?), I had, at all events, a *lady* close to me, I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms. Permission was graciously given, and I accordingly did—well, as any gentleman would do under the circumstances.

Exclamation marks, italics, and all the stereotyped forms of wonder would be wasted on this amazing revelation.

Sir William, after walking and talking with a young woman for two hours ; after holding her in his arms and presumably kissing her ; after emphasising the strength of his impression that she was a living woman, still prefers to believe, not that she was a mundane being in collusion with the medium, but that she was—a spirit !

Ridicule is easy, I am well aware ; but it was never more thoroughly deserved than by this egregious piece of folly, the whole point of which is this : that we have a scientific investigator *himself* refusing point blank to accept the evidence of his own senses—simply because it goes against his theories. Why, then, I ask, should *we* accept it when it runs counter, as it does in his observation of many of Home's phenomena, to all the proved laws of nature ?

I have another reason in drawing special attention to this séance ! Spiritualists are constantly trumping up the case of Florence Cook as indisputable evidence, and saying that the phenomena were produced at



A table equipped for spirit-rapping. The fingers control a small steel "tapper," the knee is attached by a cord to the hammer by which the louder knocks are obtained, and the foot can also rap against the foot of the table-leg. On the table are various threads and hairs used for the "levitations" described later in the article. On the card are two small studs round which the thread is usually tied for convenience in handling.

Professor Crookes' own house. Here we see that the most striking wonder of all was produced, not there, but at Hackney; and, as a matter of fact, at the home of the medium herself!

It would be easy to multiply instances of the futility of the highly "scientific" investigations of various mediums in the past; but I shall content myself with one more illustration, the experiments with "Dr." Slade by Professor Zollner. This medium was an American, chiefly remembered for his slate-writing manifestations, exposed at Bow Street by Sir Ray Lankester.

After the exposure he went to Germany

where he succeeded in convincing Professor Zollner of his genuineness, and we have as a result Zollner's book, "Transcendental Physics," an account of the experiments with Slade, full of evidence of malobservation, but brilliantly illuminating to those who can read between the lines.

Zollner devised some excellent tests, which, had they come off, would have been absolutely conclusive—conclusive, that is, not of spirit agency, but at any rate of the force christened α by Sir William Crookes. Invariably "phenomena" were produced by Slade, sufficiently like those suggested by Zollner to satisfy him, but invariably capable of explanation by fraud.

Take as an example the following:

Professor Zollner had two rings, roughly five inches and four inches in diameter respectively, made out of solid wood. He asked Slade to interlink these rings—a test which, if successful, would prove that matter had passed through matter, and consequently establish the power α !

What happened? Instead of interlinking the rings Slade caused them to encircle the knobby stem of a small one-legged table, in *apparently* impossible positions.

Apparently impossible. Slade had abundant opportunities of tampering with the table, even of taking it to pieces; and, above all, the Professor was not *expecting the rings to be found there*, and his attention could have been easily diverted by a clever illusionist, as Slade undoubtedly was. As always happens at test séances it was the unexpected that happened; yet Zollner found the "phenomenon" so convincing that he hardly realised that it was not exactly what he asked for.

I have mentioned how narrowly Slade escaped acquaintance with the inside of an English prison. Home—Sir William Crookes' medium—also fell foul of the law and was forced to disgorge the sum of £24,000 obtained by fraudulent representations to a lady. Yet these mediums are now names to conjure with among Spiritualists. It is apparently with mediums as with artists—death invariably enhances their reputation, and Spiritualists nowadays have canonised these early mediums into veritable Spiritualistic saints.

In their own day they were nearly all exposed at one time or another, and in "Twixt Two Worlds," the narrative of the life of Eglinton, another celebrated medium of thirty years ago, the following passage is significant of this fact :

In 1876 the whole movement (*i.e.*, Spiritualism) was passing through a crisis. Mediums were assailed on every side from without, and in some cases from within, the movement. "Exposures" were thick in the air. Mr. Lawrence had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment, as also had Mr. Slade, whose sentence, however, was quashed on appeal. Later, Dr. Monk was sentenced to the same term at Huddersfield. Fortunately Mr. Eglinton escaped, and though often threatened since, he has *not yet* in that respect been called upon to bear the martyr's cross.

The "not yet" seems to me particularly happy.

I mention Eglinton particularly, because he has been trumped up recently in alleged controversion of my statement that all spirit-slate-writing is produced by trickery. I am solemnly assured that Eglinton was a perfectly genuine medium, whereas the fact is that Eglinton not only used the ingenious slate-writing devices described in my article in the April number, but actually invented some of them !

And if faith in this person's powers still exists, here is a quotation to prove not only that he was fraudulent, but that he was fortunate enough not to find a high standard of intelligence among his sitters. The writer of his "Life," describing one of his sances, says :

I distinctly saw a coated arm and large, muscular hand stretched out from the medium's body, grasp the piano leg, and draw it nearer the table ; so plain was this that I did not think of materialisation. I again and again saw the same hand and arm draw the piano till it was quite close to me ; then it flashed across me that the arm, which completely intercepted the light of the lamp, was not mortal !

On what grounds did he arrive at this conclusion ? He omits to mention them ! He wished to believe Eglinton was genuine, and accordingly did so.

With rogues as mediums and fools as observers, who can wonder that the case for Spiritualism is strong enough—on paper ?

LONDON TOO DAMP FOR SPIRITS.

Physical phenomena are rather at a

discount among present-day mediums in this country. Several mediums advertise them, but the manifestations are of a crude and meagre character. A prominent Spiritualist recently stated that the English climate was too damp—the "electric climate" of the United States was the ideal one for physical manifestations.

One medium whom I recently visited hails from the electric climate aforesaid. Her name is Madame Chapin, and she lives with her sister at 69 Albany Street. When I had explained what I should like to see, she said she would gladly make an appointment for a physical séance ; and suggested that she should then and there give me a clairvoyant reading—in order to establish harmonious conditions.

To this I submitted ; and the result was a long, wearisome, and extremely futile procession of spirits, who came and stood at my elbow—unseen by me, but perfectly clear to the medium, of course. Most of them were apparently anxious to tell me something, but unable to make themselves understood ; and whenever a "spirit" was described that I could by a reasonable stretch of imagination conceive to be an actual individual I had known, it immediately disappeared on being asked for its name.

A Hindu spirit—they are always a feature of clairvoyant readings—disappeared with positively indecent haste when I addressed him in Hindustani.

However, Madame Chapin told me I was a most satisfactory and sympathetic person to sit with ; and I thought perhaps she would be more ingenious, if not more genuine, when we came to the physical phenomena.

AN INTOXICATED SPIRIT !

At the appointed hour I turned up, with three companions. Everything was quite ready for us, but the results were disappointing. The clairvoyant visions were the same as given to me when alone, but whereas on that occasion all the "spirits" who showed themselves to the clairvoyant came because they belonged to me, on this occasion they were divided amongst the other three. My Oriental did not turn up, and I only got a yellow light. The physical manifestations



Reproduced by permission of "Light" and the "Annales des Sciences Psychiques."

Another "genuine" manifestation photographed by flashlight at an actual seance. The miracle consists in the fiddle, which has appeared suddenly—in the dark, of course—from the curtained recess at the back. It is apparently resting in mid-air against the curtain. It will be noticed that the medium, sitting by the curtain, is in no way controlled by the sitters.

were crude to a degree, and consisted in what were supposed to be "spirit raps," but were really noises made by scraping the foot against the leg of the table, and feeble taps with a piece of whalebone or steel the medium held in her hand under the table. The only remarkable thing about the sitting was the fact that spirits the sitters seemed to recognise could not give their names; while one that was not recognised promptly did so! It was all a sorry farce, and pitiful beyond words.

Madame Chapin did, however, tell me something startling. She talked a good deal about "materialising séances"—of which she did not seem to approve. They were very dangerous, she declared, and she told us a most affecting story of a girl who frequently attended them regularly for the purpose of seeing her dead father who, during his life, had been addicted to drink. What happened? For a time, said Madame Chapin, everything was all right. The girl talked to her father, and derived much consolation therefrom; but, after a time, the strain of "materialising," and coming back to "earth conditions" old on the unhappy

spirit. At one séance he was seen to stagger; when he spoke his voice was husky, and there was a terrible smell of alcohol in the room. Alas! the wretched phantom was intoxicated!

That story was told to us in all seriousness by Madame Chapin; and for that reason I admit that, though her "physical phenomena" are of no account, and her "clairvoyant readings" extremely boring, as a weaver of romances she has an undeniable gift!

A SEANCE AT HOLLOWAY.

Another recent séance I attended in search of these elusive manifestations was in the region of Holloway, at the house of a man named Linley. His séance-room is situated at the top of the house, and we took our seats round a small circular table. During the medium's absence I examined the table and found it had been prepared by having the top loosened so that it could be made to turn a certain amount with little exertion. The legs also were adapted to the production of fraudulent movements. We sat with the gas fairly well up, but got nothing, till, the



Here the medium, though controlled by the sitters on either side touching his hands, has succeeded in bringing a banjo from behind the curtains. Its position in mid-air is explained by a tiny hook fixed to the handle of the banjo, and inserted in the curtains. How the medium got a hand free to get hold of the instrument is explained by the photograph on the next page.

light being turned down by degrees, absolute darkness reigned.

Then the table commenced its gymnastics, tipping up and rapping out messages in various ways. The "information" we obtained was ludicrous in the extreme, and the séance altogether was so farcical that it was difficult to be serious. Yet we left the medium thoroughly delighted with himself and his powers.

The chief wonder of this séance was that the medium should be able to impose on any human being. He is absolutely illiterate and ignorant, and his procedure must be apparent to the veriest novice. Yet he informed us that he had been: "told by the spirits" that he would soon be able to produce materialisations, and I have no doubt that, as soon as his arrangements are completed, the inhabitants of Holloway will be edified and horrified by visions of their departed relatives. At any rate, anyone foolish enough to be deceived by Linley deserves his fate.

The raps by means of which the "spirits" spell out messages are produced in a variety of ways. Linley produced most of his by tapping the table with a finger-nail.

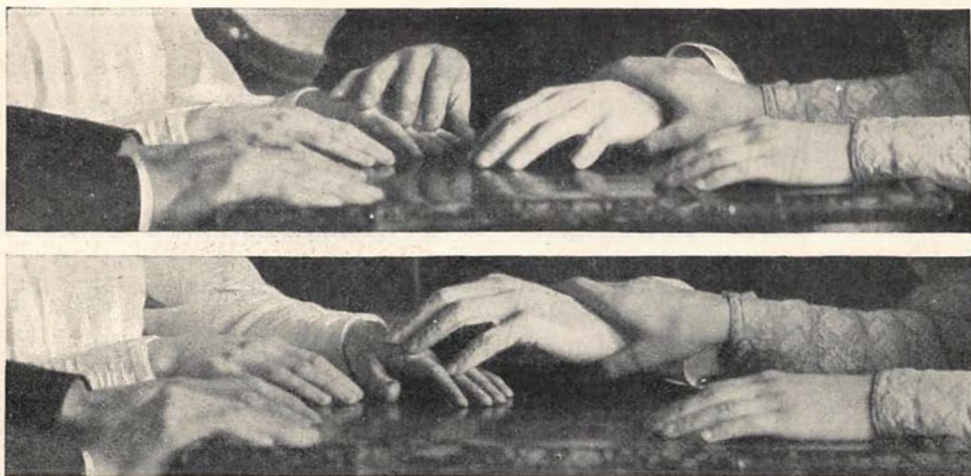
The Fox Sisters, the first mediums,

could, and many of their followers can, produce these noises by means of the joints of the big toe. I myself cannot do so with any great success, but I have met many who can. Personally, I find that the ankle answers better. At one time I could go on for any length of time, but now I find that I can only produce a limited number with any certainty. A very good method is that of the trick-shoe. In this a small piece of steel is inserted in the waist of the shoe, and, by slightly bending the foot or even moving the toes, excellent raps can be produced without any visible sign.

For loud raps a small hammer is often attached to the under side of the table. It can be attached in an instant, as it is provided with pins, and a slight pressure at once fixes it in position. The thread for working it is as quickly attached to the trouser, as it is provided with a bent pin at its end.

DISTANCE LENDS ENCHANTMENT.

I have already pointed out that the lapse of time marvellously enhances a medium's reputation. An address in a foreign country seems to have the same effect. The Editor dealt in his foreword last month with the



The upper photograph shows the two hands of the medium (in the centre) "controlled" by the sitters on either side. This is for the purpose of preventing fraud of any kind on his part. The second photograph shows how the medium has got one hand free by allowing the sitters on both sides to touch the same hand. With the free hand he produces the manifestation, and the more skillful mediums extend this trick to the feet. All mediums who work in the dark use this device.

medium Bailey, who was recently brought over from Australia to hold test sances before a committee of investigators. He was proved guilty of gross and premeditated fraud, and shipped back to the Antipodes in disgrace. And yet Professor Reichel, who had been at all the expense of bringing him to Europe, still declared his belief that Bailey could produce genuine phenomena—if he liked!

In the same way the name of Eusapia Paladino, the Italian medium, is one to conjure with, and more has been written about her and her phenomena than about any other medium. She has been detected in trickery again and again, but she has undoubtedly succeeded in mystifying quite a large number of scientific men—the late Professor Lombroso among them. Her latest success has been the "conversion" of Mr. Hereward Carrington, who is a conjuror and ought to know better.

But his position in the matter is at present a little mysterious, as he has now taken Eusapia to America, where he is apparently acting as her manager.

This woman is undoubtedly a personality. Born and bred in the slums of Naples, she married in early life a travelling conjuror—a significant fact—and has been holding her sances for many years. She has only once visited this country, and then she was detected in trickery at a sance held at

Cambridge. She has always managed to find backers, however, and even now, after her most recent exposure—a particularly dramatic and thorough one at a test sance held in New York—Spiritualists are busy whitewashing this lady's extremely parti-coloured character.

On this occasion Mr. Hugo Münsterberg, an American investigator, introduced a man secretly into the cabinet behind Eusapia's chair. From this cabinet various objects are brought forth at her sances without any apparent intervention on her part, this being the "evidence"—remarkable evidence, indeed—of the truth of Spiritualism which the medium affords. When the sance had commenced, this man found Eusapia stretching one of her legs out backwards past the side of her chair into the cabinet, and groping with her toes for the guitar lying there ready to be produced by "spirit" agency. He naturally seized hold of her foot, Eusapia screamed wildly, and the sance broke up in confusion.

Are the Spiritualists convinced? Not a bit of it. They declare that the man seized hold of Eusapia's leg and pulled it back into the cabinet to establish the case he was there to prove! As long as exposure is met in this spirit and with this class of argument, just so long will fraudulent mediums continue to practise.



By permission of the "Annals of Psychical Science."
The method of invisible support of a glass beaker by a new medium. The scientific investigator who has studied this phenomenon saw in this medium's fingers what he describes as "a phantom thread," with which she supported the object. Whenever he tried to touch the thread, the medium moved her hands, and it vanished!

In connection with this woman, Mrs. Laura L. Finch, recently editor of the "Annals of Psychical Science," who has been present at several of her séances, says:

Where Eusapia is concerned, no man's account of her phenomena should be accepted, no matter who he may be, unless he can corroborate his account with photographs.

This is, unfortunately, almost entirely precluded by the conditions upon which she insists. To quote Mrs. Finch again:

Nothing of an indisputably genuine nature occurs in the light. . . . She allows the fullest control, but nothing happens. . . . Then she demands darkness, which increases till the little light left is worse than none, for it throws queer shadows about the room. . . . Then, when the darkness is great, begins the display of Eusapia's agility, and the phenomena also begin, all within reach of her limbs. She will not allow you to hold her hands firmly, nor place your feet on hers. From now to the end of the séance she is in perpetual movement; her hands, arms, legs, body are scarcely ever still when phenomena are being produced, and her attention is, you feel, stretched to the utmost limit of human endurance. She is also endowed with great physical strength.



The "phenomenon" reproduced by normal means, namely, the use of an ordinary thread or hair. If of the same colour as the background it is quite invisible. Of the two "miracles," that in the second photograph is the more marvellous, as the fingers of the hands are separated, while in the other they are closed, thus making it easier to hold the thread.

The whole question of Eusapia's phenomena centres round the "control" alluded to by Mrs. Finch.

Theoretically, both hands and both feet are controlled by the sitter on either side of her. When the lights are first turned down, this is indubitably the case, but during the convulsions by which the medium is seized, she gets a hand free, and then immediately replaces it—or so it seems. As a matter of fact, what she has done is to convey the impression that both hands are being controlled, by allowing the sitter on either side both to touch the same hand. This simple procedure is illustrated photographically, and is one of the stock tricks of all mediums who work in the dark. She applies it also to her legs, as she had done at the séance described by Münsterberg.

I am constantly being told that I really ought, in the interests of truth, to go out to investigate this woman's phenomena. I certainly do not propose to waste months or even weeks on a journey to add to the exposure of this fraud, whether in Italy or in America.



By permission of the "Annals of Psychological Science,"
Supporting a compass in mid-air by means of the "phantom"
thread.

But, if she comes to this country, I am willing to put up any reasonable sum as a challenge, to be handed over to her if, at a test séance when proper "control" is assured and all possibility of collusion excluded, she produces any "phenomenon" whatsoever.

Another Italian medium is a certain Francesco Carancini, photographs of whose "phenomena" are reproduced on pages 609 and 612. His special forte is the "levitation" of objects—that is, the raising of them from the ground in apparent defiance of the laws of gravity.

The photographs, and the descriptions underneath them, show clearly how his "miracles" are worked.

THE GHOST OF A THREAD!

Now we come to another medium, a young girl who has entered the field, and whose genuineness has been vouched for by another scientific investigator, Dr. Julien Ochorowicz, under whose fatherly guidance she is rapidly developing.

Her phenomena have been for the most part of a simple description, consisting chiefly in the levitation of light objects. The description of these in words requires a great amount of space, so, to make them easily intelligible, I have had both the original presentation and my copy photographed.

The theory is this: Mediums are supposed



Supporting a billiard ball in mid-air by means of a real
thread, which is equally invisible.

either to have, in their own composition, or to be able to borrow from the spirit world, certain powers which the ordinary mortal has not got. One of these enables him or her to make objects disobey the laws of gravity, and to remain suspended in mid-air without any visible support.

Look at the photograph in which Miss Stanislaw Tomczyk, the medium, is seen "levitating" a glass beaker, and side by side I am doing the same thing. Miss Tomczyk has the flat side downwards, and her fingers are together. I have the rounded side down, and my fingers are far apart. The easier "miracle" is supposed to be a genuine manifestation, the more difficult one is admitted to be a childish trick.

In the next, the medium is levitating a round compass, I am levitating a ball. Again note the closed fingers of the medium, and the open hands of myself.

Lastly, the levitation of the hand of the Magic Clock (on page 618). The Doctor, as will be noticed, is sagaciously placing his hand *under* the object to make sure that the medium is not supporting it!

Perhaps I had better give the description of the phenomenon in the Doctor's own words:

The object rose, sustained by the hands of the medium, from a distance; it rose to a height a little above my head, and then, by the light of the lamp I saw, yes, I saw quite distinctly, a black thread, not very thin, going from one of the medium's hands to

the other, the right end of which was not stretched, but hung underneath the medium's right hand in the form of an irregular spiral.

"Wait," I said to the medium. "Do not move any further."

But just at this moment she began to lower her hands, wishing to bring the object on to the table. . . .

There was nothing between the medium's fingers.

He then goes on to notice the various difficulties that the medium experienced in levitating objects of various shapes; and even went to the length of telling her to make two threads so as to levitate the cover of a box more easily!

One would have thought that this was the limit of idiotic credulity, but it was not. The man sees the thread, and then sets to work to prove to himself that he did nothing of the kind. To quote his words:

We are at the boundary which separates illusion from reality, which combines them, I would say, because this phantom is not a simple hallucination; it exists objectively, it produces palpable effects. Is it a thing created from nothing? *Is it the etheric body of a real thread?* Is it the idea materialised, and if so, by the aid of what substance? Particles of ether? Atoms of the medium's body? Of her gown? Of the object? Mystery.

I must admit that when I first read this account I was inclined to think that the Doctor was a humorist. But he appears to be quite serious. For he occupies pages in the "Annals of Psychical Science" with his investigations, and finally comes to the conclusion (to which he is helped by the medium) that he has seen some new kind of force which manifests itself in the shape of an "Etheric Thread," and has the properties of a real thread.

I hardly think it necessary to devote



The invisible thread is also used for raising a flower from a vase by "spirit" agency. Even at the distance of two or three feet the thread defies detection: and this manifestation appears most wonderful—until one has the explanation.

more space to this man and his folly. The circumstances were not worth mentioning, were it not for the fact that it is on the dicta of such men of science that the whole fabric of the stupendous fraud of modern Spiritualism is based.

If the investigator had possessed the faintest knowledge of the conjuror's art, he would have known that a thread or a human hair of suitable colour in relation to the background is used for the invisible support or "levitation" of light objects; and is also employed in another phenomenon which occasionally occurs with some of the best mediums—the levitation of a flower. The medium, standing at some distance from a vase of flowers, requests the spirits to bring one, and a blossom immediately rises out of the vase and floats into the medium's hands. The trick



The phantom thread again—used this time to support the hand of a large clock. The investigator is, for some obscure reason, holding his hand *under* the object to prevent deception on the part of the medium.



The hand of a clock supported by an actual thread that is quite as hard to see as its phantom double, and was actually invisible to the sitter in the photograph.

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is an exceedingly simple one and yet remarkably effective.

It is, of course, another case of the "Ethereic Thread," various samples of which are shown in the photograph exposing spirit rappings. Against a suitable background and carefully manipulated, the thread is invisible even in a good light, and can easily be concealed when it is done with.

Such are some of the phenomena of which so much is made, such are some of the ways in which the unfortunate spirits of the departed have to occupy themselves. If it be true, life beyond the grave must indeed be a busy one, particularly for those spirits who, like the stars of the music-hall, have to appear more than once nightly. On this earth plane a man can barely support the fatigue of going to three or four places of an evening and giving his entertainment, lasting some ten minutes, at each. In the spirit world the spirits seem to think nothing of attending

some dozens of séances not only in the same evening, but all at the same time. Take poor old John King, for instance. He is just now busy with Eusapia in America, and he is also the head bottle-washer of some hundreds of other mediums. Scarcely a séance is ever held anywhere without at least a message from this worthy.

Naturally, I have not exhausted all the manifestations known as physical. They are legion, and as diversified as the tricks of a conjuror. But they are all on the same lines. The *root* idea is the same. The methods employed are *identical in principle*, though they naturally vary considerably in their details. As evidence of a spirit world that can communicate in any way with us, the much vaunted "physical phenomena" are contemptible: and they would be negligible also, were it not for the fact that on them the gigantic fraud of Modern Spiritualism is largely based.

NEXT MONTH WILL APPEAR AN EDITORIAL RESUME
OF THE RESULTS HITHERTO OF OUR INQUIRY INTO
SPIRITUALISM: AND IN THE AUGUST NUMBER WILL
BE DESCRIBED FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS INTO
ANOTHER CLASS OF SPIRITUALISTIC PHENOMENA.

Part Five:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 30
Number 175
July 1910

On the Edge of the Unknown.

The progress of our inquiry—A seance at Brixton—"Mr. Sludge the medium," and his methods—A long catalogue of frauds—The legal aspect of spiritualism—The German attitude—"Elementals: Do they exist?"—Magnetic healers and their cures.

BY THE EDITOR.

(Illustrated with photographs specially taken by Mr. E. H. Mills.)

"SPIRIT-FORMS," "SPIRIT-MESSAGES," AND "SPIRIT-HEALING."

SINCE the first announcement of our inquiry into Spiritualism was made, the results of our investigations into four important phases of the subject have been published. Firstly, in the March number, we dealt with the claims of the "mediums" who profess to be able to conjure up in bodily form the spirits of the dead; secondly, in our April issue, with "spirit-messages"—purporting to be genuine communications from the spirit world; thirdly, in May, with the magnetic, mental, and drugless healers who claim to cure disease "under spirit control" and by personal magnetism. Last month we investigated the phenomena known as "physical," by which many well-known scientists have been deceived.

Our study of the alleged "spirit-forms," "spirit-messages," and "spirit-healing" has yielded not one single genuine phenomenon. On the evidence, only one conclusion has been possible—all these manifestations are produced fraudulently, with intent to deceive, and generally with the object of extorting money from the credulous. Repeated offers on my part to investigate any of the "genuine" phenomena with accounts of which I have been almost overwhelmed, have not induced a single medium to come forward. I can only come to one conclusion: While many Spiritualists undoubtedly believe in the genuineness of the phenomena shown them by mediums, the mediums themselves know that they are entirely fraudulent, and nothing will induce them to submit to investigation.

A SEANCE AT BRIXTON.

A striking illustration of this is given by a personal experience I have myself recently had. From several quarters I

heard of wonderful phenomena produced by a Mr. and Mrs. Tomson, described as "American materialising mediums," in whose *bona fides* many Spiritualists, including Mr. W. T. Stead, implicitly believe. Through the agency of a friend who has for some time been investigating the subject on his own account, a seance was arranged to which I was to take a party. My friend stipulated that we were to watch the seance through whatever happened; if we detected fraud we might denounce it afterwards if we liked, but were not to interrupt the proceedings; and it was on this understanding that he took us.

Before giving an account of what actually happened, it will be well to give an idea of how the Tomsons' phenomena appear to those who accept them as genuine. I therefore quote the following account from a letter received by Mr. Marriott, the writer of our articles. (It is at the house of the Mrs. Lee mentioned below that the Tomsons hold their seances, all the business arrangements of which are in her hands.)

SIR,—I am most interested in your articles on Spiritualism in PEARSON'S. I know numbers of Spiritualists, and though I know that the frauds are extraordinary, to me the most horrible side of Spiritualism is its genuine side, for undoubtedly there is a genuine side. . . .

First, have you ever seen Madame Lee, at Brixton? She is genuine enough; she knows all about the frauds in Spiritualism, and never denies them. She is known all over London for her straightness, and what I say of her I would say of no other medium I ever met. She has had members of the Royal Family several times to see her. I should like you to see her and to know what you think.

The next thing I want to ask you is, have you seen the Tomsons, the American materialising mediums? If not, will you see them before you make up your mind that all materialising seances are frauds? There is no fraud about the spirits that they raise up. I will tell you all about the first materialising seance I saw with Mrs. Tomson as

medium, and I think you will see that there *could not be any fraud*. They will hold their sances anywhere in anybody's room, and you can arrange the cabinet yourself. They have been down to Cambridge to hold sances before several of the Professors, and I have been informed that the said Professors thought it all *most* marvellous.

The first sance I saw was held in Madame Lee's drawing-room, which I know well. There is no ceiling arrangement, no loose board, no anything of that kind. I, myself, helped madame to arrange the cabinet which was simply curtains hung from a hoop, and against a wall in the corner. On the evening that the sance took place there were about twenty-one people present. They were all strangers to the Tomsons, some were strangers to madame herself.

All the women were put into the drawing-room as soon as they came; when Mrs. Tomson arrived she came straight into the room and undressed before us all; she took off every rag, even her shoes and stockings, so that we could see she was going to take nothing into the cabinet. She then put on a plain black skirt and coat belonging to Madame Lee; these were examined before she put them on; everyone had also examined the cabinet and seen that there was nothing inside but a small chair for Mrs. Tomson to sit on. Mrs. Tomson then went into the cabinet, and Mr. Tomson and the men came into the room.

The sance was held in the light. The gas was turned down a little, but it was light enough to see everything. Mr. Tomson says that it does not matter how light the room is as long as the light is red or green—the spirits do not like a white light. Someone played the piano softly, and in a few minutes the spirits began to come.

One could see Mrs. Tomson sitting still in a trance all the time. Mr. Tomson does nothing but lead the people up to the cabinet when their friends come. Two or three spirits sometimes came at a time; many of them walked out into the room and spoke to people. Some were tall, some little, some men, some women; some were recognised, some not. "John King" came—you will have heard of him, he so often comes to genuine sances. I was not expecting anyone to come for me; I was certainly not thinking of my dead mother, but Mr. Tomson came to me and led me to a spirit who had come out of the cabinet, and, when I looked at her, it was my mother! I spoke to her, and she spoke to me, touched me, and stroked my face. *She was as solid as I am*. Some of the spirits *dematerialised* in front of the cabinet; they sank through the floor. One of them—a relation of Madame Lee—had hair a yard long. She brought flowers—lovely, fresh flowers. One brought a large armful, which she flung on the floor in front of us.

I have been to other sances with the Tomsons, and they have been quite as wonderful. You will see that there was no fraud. But what were the

spirits? I cannot believe that it was my own real mother that came. I do want you to see the Tomsons yourself, and to know what you think. Mrs. Lee is arranging another sance—either next Saturday or a week on Saturday. If you write or telephone to her, she will keep a place for you. The tickets are 10s. 6d., paid in advance.

The sance we actually attended was not the one mentioned in the letter, which was only received the day before our sance was to take place; but I have quoted Mr. Marriott's correspondent almost *in extenso* because her letter gives an authentic presentation of the Tomsons' phenomena as they appear to believers. On the face of it, they seemed very wonderful, if not entirely inexplicable, and I looked forward with considerable interest to seeing them for myself.

My party consisted of six men—Mr. Marriott, the Editor of another magazine, a Spiritualist who had previously sat with the Tomsons, the Fellow of a Cambridge college, the friend who had arranged the sance, and myself. On the evening of April 20th we repaired to the house of Mrs. Lee, 69 Wiltshire Road, Brixton. The arrangements for the sance had been made with her, and the fees paid in advance.

On entering the house we were greeted in the hall by Mrs. Lee, and, after divesting ourselves of overcoats, we went into the sance room, where about a dozen people were already seated in chairs arranged across one-half of the room; the other half was empty, except for the cabinet, which was, as described in the letter, situated in one corner. Near it stood Tomson, Mrs. Tomson having not yet appeared.

AN INTERLUDE.

Tomson surveyed each of us narrowly as we entered. As soon as he caught sight of Mr. Marriott, he appeared very disturbed. After a moment he went up to him and said: "I know your face; I have seen you before."

"Yes, I think you have," said Mr. Marriott.

Tomson muttered something about "not being got round so easily," and went hurriedly out of the room. A minute later Mrs. Lee entered, and requested the member of our party who had arranged the sance to go out to speak to Mr. Tomson.



During the investigations undertaken by "Pearson's Magazine" into Spiritualism, the Editor with Mr. Marriott obtained admission to a seance held at Brixton; owing to the presence of the latter, however, the mediums, Tomson by name, refused to proceed with the seance. This and the following photographs reveal the methods of trickery which they employ. The lady represents Mrs. Tomson, who actually produces the manifestations. She has been previously searched, and is seen entering the "cabinet"—a small curtained inclosure. As she enters she asks for a handkerchief—

A couple of minutes passed, and Mrs. Lee entered again, and, after accusing Mr. Marriott of being a "journalist," she announced to the company, with considerable agitation, that Mr. Tomson could not consent to hold the s'fance. Naturally anxious for further particulars, Mr. Marriott and myself then went out to discover what the trouble was. We found Tomson in the hall, exceedingly abusive and rather incoherent. He immediately turned on Mr. Marriott:

"What do you want to come and interfere with my show for?" he asked. "What is it to do with you? Why can't you leave it alone? You're a showman, aren't you? So am I. Why couldn't you come to me privately?" and a lot more in the same strain.

"Mr. Tomson," I said, "I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you are angry about. Mr. Marriott is here at my invitation, we have paid our money, and have a perfect right to see your 'show,' as you call it. What is the objection?"

Tomson then proceeded to make a rambling statement about something Mr. Marriott had said about him in an article. He accused us of having come with a view to "breaking up" the show, and further said that, if we wanted a "rough house," we could have it. He also said to Mr. Marriott: "If you mention my show in print, your life may pay for it!"

Threats of this kind, made in the presence of several witnesses, are dangerous—when they are not ridiculous; but this particular one, puerile though it may sound on paper, was at any rate useful in showing us precisely the type of person we had to deal with.

Meanwhile, Tomson had apparently been considering his position, and though still very angry, he made some attempt to cover his retreat. He said:

"I am a showman. My contract with Mrs. Lee is to give an 'entertainment.' I don't claim that it is anything supernatural.



— and is given what appears to be one. It is, as a matter of fact, a large piece of diaphanous drapery, which folds up into a very small space, and provides the material for the spirit-robe in which she soon emerges from the cabinet. This handkerchief method is frequently, but not invariably, used for the transfer of the drapery to the medium: it is, however, always handed to her by a confederate.

It is nothing to do with me what Mrs. Lee tells the people who come."

"Then, Mr. Tomson," I said, "let Mrs. Lee go into the room, announce that your séance is simply a conjuring entertainment. Then you can proceed with it as soon as you like!"

"Will you do that, Mrs. Lee?" Mr. Marriott asked, turning to her.

"No, of course not," she replied, and went on to say that such a statement would be untrue!

"MR. SLUDGE, THE MEDIUM."

While Tomson was proclaiming in the passage that he was a "showman," that his séance was an "entertainment," within the séance room the company were talking with bated breath of the antagonistic effect our presence might have on the "conditions," and were speculating as to whether the spirits would consent to "materialise" at all after such a disturbing interlude. Surely, since Browning contemptuously immortalised "Mr. Sludge, the medium," no Sludge in

the history of Spiritualism has ever cut a sorrier figure than Tomson on this occasion. If his "show" is merely clever conjuring, it is pertinent to ask: Why do the proceedings start with a hymn?—for I have unimpeachable evidence that that is the custom. Further, is it part of the "show" to persuade his audience that his bogus spirits are their dead relatives returned to earth? Tomson apparently thinks that his alleged contract with Mrs. Lee throws all the responsibility upon her. It does not. She is either a party to the fraud or else she is one of his dupes; in either case, abundant evidence is available to show that Tomson himself has represented his "phenomena" as being spiritual in origin; having now got his own definite statement that they were not, I told him that I should withdraw with my party.

Tomson then disappeared—no doubt to tell his wife what had been happening; and after Mrs. Lee had informed us that our fees would be returned to us in the morning, we left—shepherded to the door by a short, stout man, who looked as if he would, with any



The medium, having emerged from the cabinet in the semblance of a spirit form, has now to obtain the material for her next "manifestation." This may consist of the production of a bird, or a bundle of flowers; or the appearance of herself in a new disguise—as, for instance, a wonderful head of hair. The necessary materials, whatever they may be, are once more handed to her in a compact parcel by a confederate.

provocation, have provided the "rough" element alluded to by Tomson.

I have not much more to say about this affair. Mrs. Lee returned the fees next morning; and in doing so, she wrote that after we had left they "settled down, and had one of the best sésances she had ever seen."

An account of the "phenomena" produced would be instructive indeed! Unfortunately it is not available, but the fact that Tomson had the impertinence to hold his sésance, in view of his admissions, illustrates the supreme confidence with which the frauds are worked.

HOW IT IS DONE.

If Tomson's admissions meant anything at all, they amounted to a confession that the phenomena produced at his show were fraudulent. But in view of the time-worn subterfuge of mediums—by which a confessed trickster recants as soon as the danger is past—I have asked Mr. Marriott to explain exactly how the Tomson sésances are worked: and his account is illustrated with photographs which

show clearly the manner in which the flowers, birds, and spirit forms that are the marvel of Mrs. Tomson's performance are produced. Mr. Marriott writes:

THE TOMSON "PHENOMENA."

The Editor has quoted a letter giving an excellent idea of how the Tomsons' phenomena appear to those who are foolish enough, or unfortunate enough, to believe them to be of spiritual origin. He has related what took place when he attempted to see them for himself; and he now asks me to explain how the miracle is worked.

The Tomsons produced their "show" first at a well-known London music-hall, and I should like to say at the outset that, with that I have nothing to do. So long as they present it merely as a clever illusion—which it is—it is, of course, perfectly legitimate; it is entirely different when given as a spiritualistic manifestation, whether in a back parlour at Brixton or at "Mowbray House," until recently the home of Julia's Bureau, the founder of which, Mr. W. T. Stead, has declared his firm belief in the genuineness of the Tomsons.

The description of the room and the cabinet contained in the letter on page 37 is quite accurate. There is no ceiling arrangement, and no loose



The medium now emerges from the cabinet with the "spirit" bird or "spirit" flowers which are supposed to have been brought into the cabinet by obliging spirits. In the photograph, the wonderful hair—a wig, of course, the bird, and the flowers, are all shown: in practice, these are produced separately.

board; there is no deception about the cabinet. The searching, too, can be quite thorough, so long as it is done *before* the performance. Afterwards, it is quite another matter.

Mrs. Tomson, having put on the borrowed coat and skirt, enters the cabinet; her first need is drapery to enable her to take the semblance of a spirit form. This drapery can be handed to her in a variety of ways, which, depends entirely on the circumstances of each séance. In one of the photographs the medium may be seen taking in her hand what appears to be a handkerchief. That handkerchief is, as a matter of fact, the drapery which in the other pictures clothes the ghosts. It is exceedingly fine in texture, and will crumple up into an almost inconceivably small space. The action of handing the medium a handkerchief as she enters the cabinet is so apparently unsuspecting, that it will not even be remembered by the unskilled observer, and it is consequently most frequently employed. Failing this, other opportunities can always be found.

Mrs. Tomson now has her spirit drapery. After a little while she emerges, robed in white—a spirit form certainly ethereal enough to look at. After moving about and conversing with the sitters, she returns to the cabinet, carrying with her in a compact parcel the bird and the flowers, afterwards to be produced from the cabinet as gifts from the spirit world. The wonderful hair referred to in the letters

is, of course, a wig, and is obtained in exactly the same way. During a séance Mrs. Tomson will make many exits from the cabinet. At each exit she deftly hands the "properties" she has finished with to a confederate, and takes a new load.

One "phenomenon" produced by the Tomsons not mentioned in the letter I have already referred to, but described to me by one who recently attended one of the séances, is reminiscent of the frauds practised by Florence Cook on Sir William Crookes. Mrs. Tomson produces from the cabinet another form, which she actually leads out among the audience; in the case described to me it was the spirit of a man in evening dress!

How is it done?

The male spirit is a confederate, openly present as a sitter, who is smuggled into the cabinet under cover of Tomson's movements, Tomson also masking his empty chair until an opportunity is made for him to return to it. There is a limit to the phenomena that can be produced by a performer working single handed; when one or more confederates are employed there is practically no limit; at the same time a considerable amount of nerve is certainly needed to bring off this manifestation. But there are just two things to remember. First, "nerve" is half, perhaps more than half, of the showman's stock-in-trade, and we have Tomson's word for it that he is a showman:



Another startling manifestation occasionally produced by Mrs. Tomson. A male spirit—in evening dress!—is led out of the apparently empty cabinet. This male spirit is actually a confederate who has been smuggled into the cabinet under cover of Tomson's movements! This ridiculous "phenomenon" was taken quite seriously by the credulous circle of sitters on whom these mediums systematically impose in this and similar ways.

second, the audience are, for the most part, devout spiritualists, who would not dream of upsetting the "conditions" by anything so heartless as cold-blooded investigation; while if a turbulent spirit *should* chance to gain admission, Tomson himself is always prowling about to prevent any interference with his "show."

And in the background there is always the "rough" element alluded to by Tomson, which may be necessary, but does not sound very creditable.

The Tomsons work in quite a good light, yet the amateur investigator would have a very poor chance of detecting their tricks, unless forearmed with a certain amount of technical knowledge. But the same remark applies, of course, to any good conjuring entertainment.

The Tomson "phenomena" are by no means unique. Indeed, their chief importance lies in the fact that they are practically identical with others that have been produced before scientific investigators, and have entirely convinced them of what are euphuistically termed "the glorious truths of Spiritualism."

To mention only one case, Professor Reichel, a well-known investigator, conducted experiments with a medium named Miller in San Francisco. His cabinet was a bay window, shut off from the

rest of the room by a curtain, from behind which spirit forms appeared while the medium was in full view of the sitters and in front of the curtain. This was a case of even more childish deception than the Tomsons'. The confederates impersonating the spirits made use of the bay window for their exits and their entrances—a delightfully simple expedient. Of this séance, Professor Reichel says: "It was not given under test conditions. . . . The cabinet was examined *before* and *after* the sitting." Note, not *during* the proceedings. Could anything be more childish? Yet Professor Reichel appeared not only satisfied but convinced; on what grounds, in the face even of his own evidence, it is hard to say.

So much for the Tomsons and their "show." These people appear to be smart enough, and it is to be hoped that they will in future employ their talent in a legitimate manner. Their manifestations and their methods are both very old and similar to those produced and used by Florence Cook, whose frauds were described last month, and many other mediums. The stage management is better, but that is all.



A "dematerialisation" — Mrs. Tomson's most striking "phenomenon." Robed in white, a spirit-form stands at the door of the cabinet —

(returned herewith), not only in this country but in others. The individual in question is of a rather ambitious nature, which will help to bring about many things, even such as may seem to be, at first sight, beyond the range of possibility. Marriage promises to improve material conditions, but must not be contracted in undue haste. Between the ages of thirty and forty, or even later in life, appears to be a suitable time.

I do not see that the owner of the glove is addicted to any special form of vice, and is shown to me as honest and upright, and a lover of the beautiful in all things.

I sense, however, that a restless feeling exists at times, together with a desire to have done with present surroundings, and to "seek fresh woods and pastures new."

A spirit says: "Have no fear for

As for Mrs. Lee, the stage-manager of these séances, I have said that it is not possible to define exactly her position in regard to them. She may be one of the deluded, though it seems improbable; at any rate, she makes her living, or a part of it, out of the proceeds of these fraudulent "entertainments." For the rest, she advertises herself in the Spiritualist papers as a "psychometrical reader," who supplies "psychometry by post" for half-a-crown. The meaning of the term seems to be this: one sends her an article habitually worn or carried, together with the fee, and in return Mrs. Lee makes prophecies regarding one's future, and gives a sort of delineation of character.

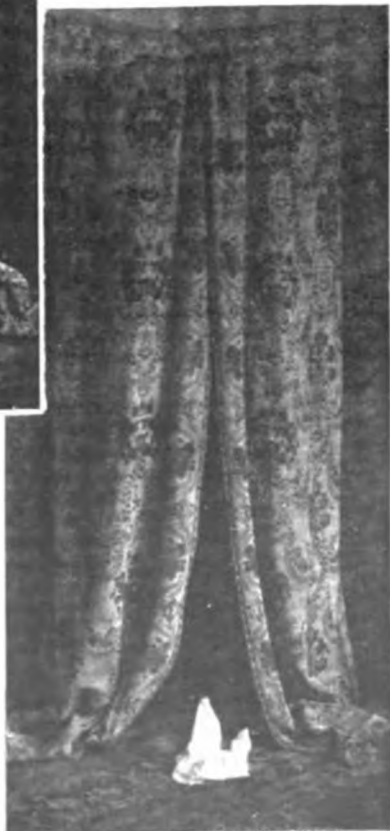
As a case in point, I recently caused a glove to be sent to her; and she, in due course, forwarded the following psychometrical reading of its owner:

Many changes are shown for the owner of the glove



— and gradually sinks into the ground! The actual method of illusion—which when well manipulated is quite effective—is shown in the photographs. The medium, who is of course personating the spirit, gradually sinks to the ground—

— and under cover of the drapery retires at length behind the curtains, until only a fragment of "spirit" drapery is left. This is finally drawn into the cabinet.





To lend colour to the deception, the medium is often apparently visible inside the cabinet at the same time as a spirit form outside. This, when confederates are not employed, is done by means of a wire frame over which drapery is arranged in the vague semblance of a human form. During a seance, the medium will emerge from the cabinet in many disguises—in the photograph, for instance, she is wearing the mask of a man's face.

the future. Material things will greatly improve as the years go by."

ZEILAH LEE.

Not much can be deduced from so vague and colourless a document. The individual referred to was already married, and a good deal before the age of thirty. Here Mrs. Lee was clearly at fault; as for the rest of the remarks, they might be applied without fear of contradiction to nine persons out of every ten.

So long as Mrs. Lee takes half-crowns for representing ridiculous banalities of this sort to be of any serious value whatever, she must expect herself to be included in the same category as other pseudo-occult deceivers.

THE DIARY OF A SPIRITUALIST.

While the majority of Spiritualists—if I am to judge from the correspondence in the Spiritualist papers—view anything in the nature of exposure with an uneasiness approaching rancour, some take the proper view—that fraud ought to be shown up ruthlessly. The following letter is one of many similar in tenor received by Mr. Marriott and myself:

DEAR SIR,—

I cannot refrain from writing to thank you for your exposure of the fraudulent tricks practised by mediums under the cloak of Spirit alism.

I am sorry to say I must class myself as one who has been fooled to the top of my bent, and I cannot be too grateful to you for coming to the rescue, and hope that your work will meet with the merit it deserves from every right-minded seeker after truth. . . .

I have never met a really true medium.

Since this letter was received, I have interviewed the writer, who has placed at my disposal her diary of experiences with mediums, of whom she has consulted over twenty.

In deference to her wishes I refrain from publishing their names, though a list of them has been placed before me. I content myself with saying that many of them are recognised by me as those of constant advertisers in the Spiritualist papers; and that where it is, in the nature of things, possible, documentary evidence has been put before me in support of the charges made.

I have selected four or five representative cases from the long list of deceivers in the diary referred to:

MRS. J.—A clairvoyant medium, among whose guides was Cleopatra, to whom she always referred familiarly as Cleo. Her predictions and advice were invariably proved wrong by events. She was exceedingly grasping as well as ungrateful; the following extract from one of her letters finally

showed me that she was merely a new species of the begging letter fiend:

"The Guides say I am to ask you to help me practically—I cannot do anything unless I have the means to carry out the work for a time until I succeed—and I shall succeed if I start right. I want about £50. .

"The Guides tell me you can see a way to get it for me at once. They say I am to tell you they will all redouble their efforts to help you if you will help me, and will concentrate their powers for a given time daily to bring about perfections of beauty, power, and success."

And so on for several pages.

A GUILDFORD STREET MEDIUM.—This man wrote to me that the reincarnation of Jesus Christ was on earth, and I was chosen to be his wife. He suggested that he himself was the reincarnation.

THE BLINDFOLD MEDIUM.—The girl (mentioned in the April number) who professes to answer written questions while blindfold, deceived me with false hopes. The reverse of her predictions almost invariably happened. I was put to great expense and anxiety by relying upon them. When I complained of the badness of her predictions and advice, she affected to be "controlled," and wrote on a piece of paper: "Oh, ye of little faith." When this did not satisfy me, she became very insolent, threatened me with the vengeance of her spirit-guides, and offered to return the fees I had paid her. This, however, she did not do.

MR. W.—I went with a friend to this man, a well-known materialising medium. We detected him rising and leaning over the table to imitate the "materialising" of spirits.

MRS. W.—Told me a spirit was madly in love with me, and was about to materialise and propose marriage; and that he had often done so before with other women!

This list could be extended indefinitely, and in far greater detail. I have quoted enough, however, to emphasise the prevalence of these disgraceful frauds, in which profanity and all sorts of veiled suggestions play a part. The latter is a point I do not propose to labour at this moment. I content myself with asking my readers to compare

the suggestion made by the last medium in the above list with the following statement made to me in the course of a long letter from Mr. Thomas May, a well-known student of Spiritualism, who writes:

Spiritualism undoubtedly lends itself to immorality. All mediums ought to be made to take out a license, and be subjected to police inspection. These private and highly paid séances lend themselves to all kinds of suggestion and neurotic ends.

LICENSES FOR MEDIUMS.

In America the license system is actually in force, and must bring in a considerable revenue. Each city has a different fee, the payment of which secures mediums the



"Properties" similar to those used at the Tomson and kindred seances. In the photograph are seen the various masks used for disguise, the "spirit" drapery, the wig, and all the other paraphernalia that are employed in deceiving the credulous.

freedom to pursue their calling at a price varying from £30 to £80 a year.

This system suggests that the American authorities are alive to the nature of the medium's business; but it has rather an air of compounding the felony. In some countries the question is treated in a much more effective manner. The following extract from the *Christian Herald and Signs of our Times*, for instance, reflects the German attitude:

"GHOST" IS SEIZED AND IMPRISONED.

Paul Abend and his wife, who professed to be agents between this world and the domain of spirits, were lately arrested at Berlin on a charge of systematic fraud, and conveyed to the police headquarters to await their indictment by the public prosecutor. They had carried on this business for years, figuring publicly as masseur and masseuse. Frau Abend, however, had obtained a reputation as a medium, and she and her husband held séances every day for customers, who came and paid considerable sums of money to be put in communication with departed relatives and friends. A séance was taking place in a darkened room, when a detective, who had obtained entrance by stealth, suddenly seized Frau Abend as she was being transformed into a ghost to receive communications from the other world. The police officer caught her in the act of drawing from her sleeve, where it had been concealed, a phosphoric veil, which would give her a ghostly appearance. Frau Abend immediately collapsed, and tore her clothes in pieces, hoping to conceal the phosphoric veil in the general confusion. She also called to her husband to remove her dress, but he was helpless, having been seized by a second detective. Preliminary investigations into the case show that this couple had many hundreds of regular customers, not only in Germany, but in many other European countries. It is estimated that during the last three or four years they earned an annual income of approximately £3000.

There cannot be the faintest doubt that the great majority of, and probably all, the mediums who have been denounced as frauds during the progress of our inquiry, ought to be in precisely the same situation as Paul Abend and his wife. They are daily committing deliberate offences against the law, and action could be taken against them under the Vagrants' Act by any one of those whom they deceive or attempt to deceive; but it is natural that private individuals should shirk the expense, responsibility, and notoriety entailed by such a course.

Quite apart from the general question as to whether Spiritualism has or has not a genuine basis, Spiritualists themselves should be the first to set their house in order, and drive frauds of this kind out of their sordid business. Failing that, the time will come when the process of cleansing will be undertaken by an outside agency.

"ELEMENTALS: DO THEY EXIST?"

Candour on the part of Spiritualists should go further than exposing and admitting fraud where it exists. A large number of them are ready, far too ready, to accept any wild theory that is put forward.

Glancing through a recent number of *Light*, I found the following letter gravely inserted:

ELEMENTALS: DO THEY EXIST?

SIR,—In *Light* of April 9th the Rev. C. E. Hutchinson asks for "experiences of Elementals," and in reply I may say that I have given many years of my life to the study of this question. A gentleman and I had each a certain number of the sylphs, or aerial spirits, trained to obey us; they were very powerful, much attached to us, and were faithful servants. At our bidding they came, and went away when dismissed. Among other duties to which we had them trained, was the drawing or extracting the essence or life force from fruits, plants, trees, and flowers, and from the depths of the sea. We caused them to store this force on the tops of some high hills in Scotland, where human beings would not be likely to go, as we did not wish any human magnetism to become mingled with what we had stored up. In serious ill-health we sent them to draw from those stores and bring us what was gathered, and by this means our health was many times improved.

We also taught them to stand behind us when magnetising a sick person and throw their power into us. There are many races of Elementals, some very evil, but we never had any experience of them, though of evil human spirits I have had more than enough.

Yours, etc.,

A. BOWIE.

It is true that the Editor, with praiseworthy reserve, asks his correspondent, in a footnote, for proofs? That is not my point. I say, without any qualification whatsoever, that the man who wrote that letter must be absolutely dead to any sense of proportion, humour, or sanity; and I rather think that the remark might be legitimately extended to those who can treat such Bedlamite nonsense with any

degree of patience. If Spiritualism were at the root genuine, it would inevitably remain suspect so long as Spiritualists and Spiritualistic organs continued to disseminate this kind of rubbish.

"HEALERS WHO DO NOT HEAL."

Though, at the time of writing, the May number has only been a few days published, a large amount of correspondence has reached me relating to the article appearing therein on "Magnetic," "Mental," and "Spirit" healers. Many of the letters have come from people who have had experience of their treatment, and have come to realise its uselessness; but I have had communications also from several healers.

In at least three cases the writer has congratulated me on exposing the persons named in the article, adding that, whereas they were undoubtedly fraudulent, he (the writer) was perfectly genuine.

All I can say is that, up to the present, not one has succeeded in demonstrating the fact. Many have sent statements as to cures, and a few more or less unsatisfactory testimonials from obviously ignorant patients. Not one has produced in evidence a single case with its full medical history.

This is the more remarkable as Mr. Marriott pointed out in his article that the use of hypnotic suggestion could be, in certain cases, of undeniable curative value. The fact is that the great majority of so-called "magnetic" healers are not only ignorant medically, but, like almost all "mediums," are of a low order of intelligence. Suggestion, occasionally a valuable instrument to the skilful physician, is nothing but an empty name when employed by the average "healer."

Just one instance of the abysmal ignorance of these people. A "healer" wrote to me declaring his powers, and referring me to an article recently written by him for the *Occult Review*. In one of its opening paragraphs this statement was made:

The comparison of hypnotism with anæsthetics is an unfortunate one for the latter practice, as the recently very much discussed death percentage from operations under anæsthetics at Guy's and other hospitals clearly proves. It is admitted 33 per cent. of cases treated have died from the effects of the anæsthesia, apart from those who are admitted to

have collapsed as the results of the operation, and which is given as about 16 per cent.

No expert is needed to see that this is not only inaccurate, but simply a frigid mis-statement—probably due to ignorance, but not less culpable on that account. As a matter of fact, to take the case of the hospital mentioned, in the first four months of this year not a single death due to anæsthetics has occurred, though the number of cases in which general anæsthetics have been given was over 2000.

The healer I have just referred to told me also some startling stories of the miracles he had wrought, including at least two cures of blindness. When, however, I asked for further details, and pointed out that I must, as a preliminary to investigation, have medical testimony that the various ailments had existed, he became abusive; among other things, he wrote:

You are acting in the interests of the medical faculty to depreciate such cures, and are paid, I presume, to do so. The millions given by misguided rich people to hospitals are largely used in subsidising papers and magazines. This part of the business is quite understood.

and wound up by calling down a curse upon my head. If a blend of malice and ignorance were any qualification for healing, this man should be able to work miracles indeed.

The law, at present, apparently allows any person, however ignorant of medical science, to practise as a healer; and far more stringent regulations are obviously desirable, if only in the interests of the credulous persons who are at present being imposed upon by these humbugs.

"SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHS."

The subject of our inquiry in next month's article will be "Spirit Photography." Various mediums profess to be able to obtain on the plate an impression of the spirit form of a deceased relative of the sitter who appears in the photograph.

Others, again, obtain spirit-forms on the plate merely by "magnetising" it, and without exposing it in the camera at all. The methods by which "spirit photographs" are taken will be fully explained by Mr. Marriott in the August number.

Part Six:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 30
Number 176
August 1910

On the Edge of the Unknown.

Our investigations into Spiritualism have already extended to many of the alleged spirit-manifestations upon which the Spiritualist doctrine is based. Everywhere—at the seances where mediums profess to conjure up in bodily form the spirits of the living; in "spirit-messages"; and in magnetic and mental healing—fraud, and fraud only, has been discovered: outrageous and heartless fraud perpetrated chiefly for the sake of gain. The following article deals with "Spirit-Photography"—believers in which declare that spirits, though invisible to the eye, can be photographed by the camera.

V.—SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHS.

By WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

THE FIRST SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHER.

"SPIRIT" Photography was one of the earliest of the manifestations of "spirit" communications that followed on the outbreak of modern Spiritualism; and it is perhaps significant of the eternal fitness of things that just as the latter had its beginning in the fondness of two little girls—the Fox sisters, who became the first mediums—for practical jokes, so "Spirit" Photography owes its birth to the clumsiness of an incompetent photographer.

This man, Mumler by name, was, according to his own account, endeavouring to take a photograph of himself in a friend's studio, when, on developing the plate, he found that another form appeared upon it besides his own. Being, in his own words, "interested in the doctrine of Spiritualism," this intelligent person passed over his first

impression that the plate had been previously exposed, jumped to the conclusion that the form was that of a spirit, and shortly afterwards set up in business as the first Spirit-Photographer.

This was in 1861, when photography was far less understood than at present; and it is easy to see how this man, by reproducing portraits of their deceased friends, succeeded in thoroughly bewildering his sitters. Among the latter (so it is recorded in the "History of Spirit-Photography") were Mrs. Lincoln, the wife of the martyred President, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten (a prominent Spiritualist), and Professor Gunning (the usual Professor, in this case, of Geology, which apparently was held to fit him for photographic investigation).

Mumler was prosecuted for fraud, but he was probably fairly clever in his deceptions, as he succeeded in



PHOTOGRAPH OF MRS. LINCOLN,
with spirit of Abraham Lincoln and Son.
BY MUMLER, BOSTON, U.S.A.
Copied by HUNSON.
See "Human Nature," December, 1914.

One of the earliest Spirit-Photographs, taken by the first Spirit-Photographer, an American. The widow of Abraham Lincoln, who appears in the photograph, believed in him (as did all his victims) by reason of her absolute ignorance of photography.

hoodwinking several professional photographers, who set out to investigate his methods; and consequently he got off. "Not the least evidence was ever produced by any expert or amateur photographer that the Mumler pictures were fraudulent"—so says the History quoted above. This is true; the only evidence to that effect was produced by Mumler, and was, in short, the pictures themselves.

The example reproduced in the History is a truly terrible affair; it shows a female "spirit" leaning over the shoulder of a man, and is about as useful in proving the case for Spirit-Photography as a hearth-rug. Our own specimen of this man's handiwork is equally dreadful; its only real interest lies in its antiquity, and the alleged presence of the spirit of Abraham Lincoln.

Mumler, it must be remembered, was the first Spirit-Photographer; test conditions in taking the photograph were apparently seldom or never insisted on; the recognition of the spirit-form was held to be the chief proof. The general ignorance of photographic detail was responsible for this mistaken idea; and afterwards some attempt at "test" conditions was frequently made. I shall show later exactly how useful these test conditions were—and are.

Since the days of Mumler there have been many Spirit-Photographers; but as it is chiefly with the modern aspect of the matter that I am concerned, I attempt nothing in the nature of a detailed history.

Before passing on, however, the photograph on this page, in which the "spirit" of a child appears side by side with a shadowy form, alleged to be the mother,

deserves special mention. This was taken by Hudson, one of the earliest of English Spirit-Photographers; and, as in the case of the Mumler picture, the dismal fake carries its own condemnation. The spirit-child is nothing more psychic than an ordinary doll, as the picture clearly shows. The shrouded spirit-form is due to photographic faking of the most elementary type. Yet this photograph is spoken of with bated breath by Spiritualists as evidence in favour of the most ridiculous of all their ridiculous allegations.

Coming to more modern times, the name

of Boursnell is encountered as the most advertised of all Spirit-Photographers. This man produced many hundreds of photographs, and, in fact, made his living in this way. He worked occasionally under what were supposed to be test-conditions; but the vast majority of his pictures were produced without any attempt being made by his sitters to protect themselves from fraud, and his fraudulent practices have been more than once exposed.

Boursnell, who died within the last year or so, was quite an uneducated man, and his systematic frauds are explained, if not excused, by the fact that various persons, who should have been better able to judge for themselves between sense and nonsense, encouraged him in the pursuit. Boursnell produced scores of Spirit-Photographs for Mr. W. T. Stead, of the *Review of Reviews* and "The Julia Bureau." Some of the negatives of these pictures are in the possession of Mr. Ernest H. Mills, who at Mr. Stead's request accompanied him, as a photographic expert to Boursnell's studio; and they constitute the most complete and damning evidence of Boursnell's trickery.



Another early Spirit-Photograph, which carries its own condemnation. The "Spirit" child is nothing more or less than a doll, while the "Spirit" form in the foreground is due to elementary faking.



A photograph of Mr. W. T. Stead, taken by a Spirit-Photographer named Boursnell, recently dead. The patch of light, supposed to be the spirit-influence on the plate, was in reality caused by a chemical being brought into contact with its sensitised surface.



Here is given a much more striking effect, suggestive of a skeleton form, avowedly produced in the manner described—by splashing the plate with chemical at haphazard. This was the result of an experiment by Mr. E. H. Mills, who was present at the sitting at which Mr. Stead was photographed.

Several of these photographs are reproduced here; in one, above Mr. Stead, appears a luminous patch which is supposed to be the first effort of a spirit to impress its image on the plate; in another (on page 166), Mr. Mills, the sitter who should have appeared in the picture, has been crowded out by the wealth of "psychic extras."

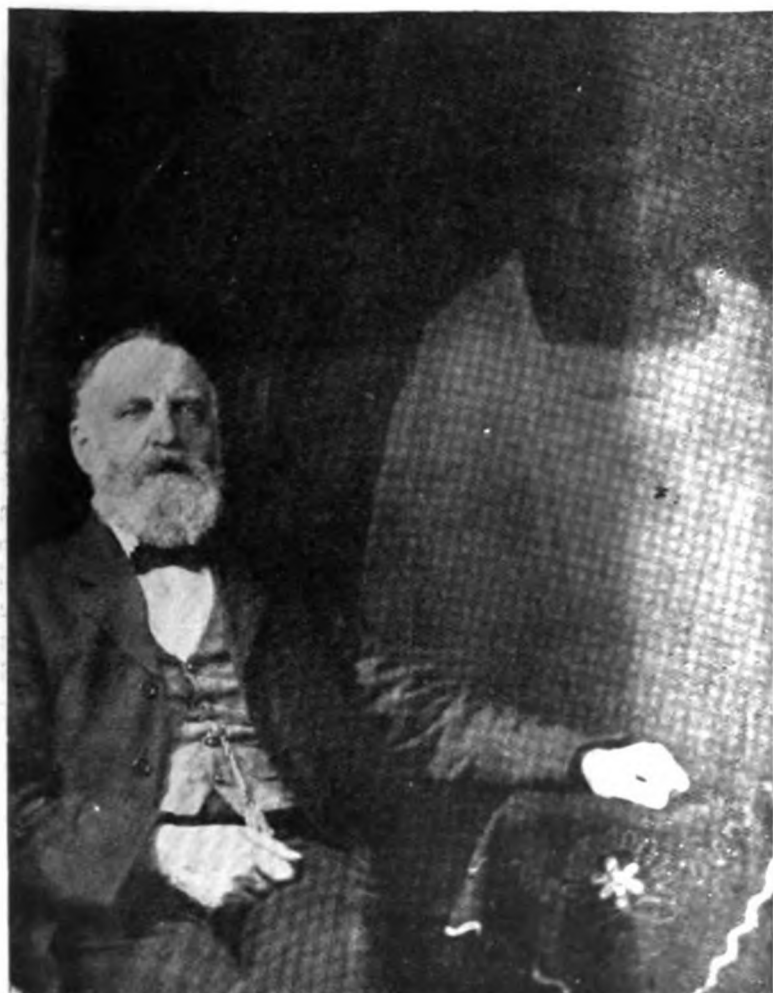
The illustration on page 165 is the famous Spirit-Photograph of Piet Botha, about which much was written at the time of its production. It was taken during the Boer War, and much was made of it at the time, because the photograph was recognised by those who had known him in South Africa.

This seems a very curious case at first sight. But the mystery vanishes on consideration. Piet Botha was recognised, *after his death*, in Boursnell's picture. A glance at the latter will show that there is at any rate some ground for the theory that this might be as easily due to imagination as to recognition, as the spirit-face is exceedingly fuzzy and indistinct. But let us go a step farther. The

spirit-face *does* bear a striking resemblance in some respects to the face of Boursnell himself. In the lower photograph I show how a little manipulation, and the addition of some drapery and a beard have actually been able to transform a photograph of Boursnell into a very tolerable likeness of the alleged Piet Botha. My strong suggestion is that this was, in effect, precisely Boursnell's method in this case.

But the last of the series, that reproduced on page 166, is the most important from the point of view of direct evidence of fraud. An explanation must necessarily be somewhat technical, but I will express the facts as simply as possible.

Boursnell's camera was of the old-fashioned type. He generally used a dark slide which only held one plate. This dark slide had pins to keep the plate in position, two at the top and one at the bottom. Now, when a photograph was taken there would be on the negative the marks of these pins which would show as transparent glass. If a print were made these pins would show as black marks.



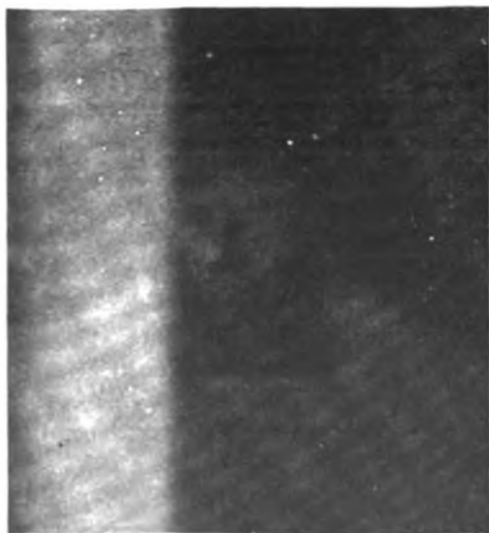
The famous Spirit-Photograph in which Mr. W. T. Stead is shown side by side with a spirit-form alleged to be that of a deceased Boer leader, Piet Botha by name. The photograph of the "spirit" is so hazy that no recognition could be taken as very definite; further, it is a strong probability that the spirit Botha is actually the photographer, Boursnell, himself. Compare his photograph above with that below—

In this print you will notice several pin marks appear at the bottom, some black, some white. What does this mean? Simply that several exposures have been made; two ghosts, flowers, and a human sitter were photographed separately, the images being finally all transferred to one plate. Thus we see four pin marks on the print; they prove beyond the shadow of doubt that the plate was exposed several times. In other words, that the ghosts were obtained by trickery.

Even this is not all. Everyone is aware that glass occasionally has bubbles in it. In the print some of these bubbles are to be seen. But I have carefully examined the negative, and there is not a trace of a bubble on the glass. How then

do they come? It is very simple. The plate on which one ghost was taken had a bubble on it. This photographed itself on to the second plate when the exposure was made, thus affording further proof of the fraudulent nature of the transaction.

Another of Boursnell's patrons and backers is Mr. Henry Blackwell, who still breaks forth periodically in the illustrated Press with articles which aim at proving the authenticity of his Spirit-Photographs. He always has the same tale to tell, of wonderful happenings, chiefly with Boursnell, but also occasionally with himself as the operator. He has collected in this country and in America a large number of "Spirit" Photographs, and a few of them were exhibited recently at a photographic exhibition in



—which is a photograph of Boursnell, manipulated by the addition of a beard and drapery.



This "Spirit" Photograph, taken by Boursnell, declared by Spiritualists to be a genuine photographic medium, is so full of spirits that the human sitter has been crowded out. The reproduction is from an untrimmed print, and various technical points, fully explained in the article, prove it to have been obtained by multiple exposure, one of the crudest tricks in the Spirit-Photographer's repertoire. Chief among these points are the several images—black and white—of the pin used to keep the plate in position in the dark slide; and the bubbles, marked by arrows, showing in the print but not in the glass of the negative.

was taken in America several years ago, and at any rate goes to prove that Spirit-Photography there is as crude in its workmanship as in this country.

It is easily to be understood that demand creates supply in the matter of Spirit-Photographs as in other things. So long as Boursnell found people ready and anxious to be deceived and to pay for being deceived, it is not surprising that his deception continued. "*Populus vult decipi decipiatur.*" One has, naturally, sympathy with his dupes; but this sympathy is apt to become a rather complex emotion when one of them not only vouches for the genuineness of fraudulent Spirit-Photographs, but lays claim to ability to

London. They were labelled "genuine," and presumably they were the pick of his collection. If so, I shudder to think what the mass must be like; they were atrocities of the most hopeless description, and the photograph reproduced on the opposite page might be typical of them. The human figure in this case is Mr. Blackwell himself, while the "spirit" form is described as "An Ancient"—who appears on the scene for some reason not explained. This photograph

produce genuine spirit-pictures himself.

Self-delusion in Spiritualistic matters explains much, it is true; to quote again from the "History of Spirit-Photography":

Self-delusion is to be reckoned with. Those who suffer from it are undoubtedly honest. It is easy for the imaginative, for those hungering for a sign from beyond, to mistake a chemical stain in a print, or a trace of "fog" in a plate, for a face. . . .

This is true enough; this form of self-delusion is pitiful, but not culpable; but the

self-delusion that can engineer double exposures, and make use of all the known expedients for faking, in order to deceive the credulous, is another matter, and deserves a harsher name.

THE CASE OF WYLLIE.

During the past few months an American photographic medium, by name Wyllie, has been advertising regularly in the British Spiritualist papers. His claim is that, on taking a photograph of any sitter, he can produce on the plate the spirit-face or form of one of the sitter's departed relatives; not, of course, guaranteeing to do this in every case, but holding out that expectation.

On Wyllie's arrival in England, the *Two Worlds*, a Spiritualist paper published in Manchester, appointed a commissioner to investigate his work, and hitting on the happy idea of appointing a Mr. Coates, himself a professional Spiritualist, and the man who engineered Wyllie's visit, the result of the investigation naturally was a clean bill of health for Wyllie, who forthwith commenced taking Spirit-Photographs of all and sundry in return for a fee varying from five shillings to a guinea. Once or twice he has given séances under "test" conditions, with the value of which I shall deal presently; in his ordinary practice, however, no such conditions are observed, as the following account from one, who was recently photographed by Wyllie, will show:

I visited Mr. Wyllie at his lodgings in Manchester to have a Spirit-Photograph taken; he was out when I called, and I waited in his studio—which was simply the front room of the house. I glanced over his apparatus, etc., about which there was nothing at all remarkable. The camera was of the studio-type, and fitted with an old-fashioned portrait lens; a background of black woollen material was pinned to the wall; there was nothing suspicious on this, and nothing behind it. The only other things in the room that seemed connected in any way with Spirit-Photography were a large number of negatives lying on the table. These all showed a "spirit" in addition to the usual portrait. All



A "Spirit" Photograph taken some years ago in America in which a well-known English Spiritualist, appears side by side with two alleged Spirits. It is a significant fact that in the "composition" of the picture the photographer has placed the sitter on one side, to provide room for the "Spirit-forms."

were bad negatives from a technical point of view most of them being slightly fogged.

When Wyllie arrived, I found him to be a man probably of over sixty. After some conversation he agreed to take the photograph, and placed me in a chair close to the background. He then left the room, taking with him a dark slide from the camera—apparently to insert a plate. He soon returned, and prepared to take the photograph. I told him that I should particularly like the portrait of a certain deceased relative, but he told me that he could in no case control results; he merely did the mechanical part, and was the passive instrument of the spirits. He then took the photograph, and, removing the dark slide from the camera, intimated that the sitting was at an end. At my request, however, he consented to take another photograph; and when he had done so, I asked him if he thought he had any psychic result. He answered: "I think so—certainly on the second plate, for I saw a light near you."

I was very anxious that he should develop the plates there and then, as I was aware that to leave them in his possession undeveloped would give him ample opportunities for "faking"; but he positively refused this request, making the excuse that he had no convenience for working except after dark. In the course of further conversation, he was very bitter against the proceedings of other professional mediums, and hinted that most Spirit-



A "Spirit-Photograph" taken recently in Manchester by an American Spirit-Photographer named Wyllie, who is at present in this country taking "Spirit" Photographs for anyone who will pay his fee. The "Spirit" face that appears on the sitter's coat is due, as even a novice in photography can see, to faking of the crudest order.

Photographers were frauds, mentioning Boursnell by name in this category.

The photograph resulting from the sitting did not reach me till three weeks afterwards; and, as it is being reproduced, I need not say much about it.

The "spirit" bears no resemblance whatever to anyone I have ever known, and appears to be due to a second exposure of the plate. There is certainly no reason whatever why any intelligent person, Spiritualist or otherwise, should believe it to be the work of the spirits.

I have examined carefully the photograph in question, and readers of this article can do likewise, for it appears above. The "spirit" face was probably produced by direct contact printing from a positive on to the plate before development—a simple process which every amateur photographer will be able to grasp. But the exact method does not matter. The point is that the photograph has not, in itself, or by reason of the conditions under which it was taken, the slightest claim to be considered authentic. It is a fraud, and not even an ingenious fraud; and it is nothing short of disgraceful

that a person of the Wyllie type should be allowed by the authorities to continue day by day and week by week in his sordid work of deception. In this enlightened age we have "Societies for Preventing" most undesirable things—among them a good many things far less undesirable than the heartless trickery by which the mediums of all kinds raise groundless hopes in the bosoms of a large number of confiding people. A Society for stamping out frauds of this kind is an urgent need.

"TEST" CONDITIONS.

I have pointed out in a previous article that the "test" conditions under which Spiritualistic phenomena of all kinds take place are so devised that it is *apparently* impossible for them to occur except by supernatural agency. This applies also to the "test" conditions under which spirit photographs are taken, when a test is insisted on.

The photographer suggests, if he does not actually decide, the conditions, and if a too difficult task is set him, he can always take refuge in the fact that he does not guarantee results.

But, as a matter of fact, it is true to say that, broadly speaking, human ingenuity cannot devise conditions which human ingenuity cannot circumvent, and this applies nowhere with greater force than in the case of "Spirit" Photography.

I am not a "genuine" Spirit-Photographer. I do lay claim, however, to a certain ingenuity at faking photographs, even under the noses of intelligent observers. Spiritualists, of course, will admit this, and bring forward the old argument that the existence of the counterfeit does not disprove the existence of the genuine.

This is in reality a mere red herring across the track of argument. If two men produce identical phenomena under identical conditions, if the phenomena are such that all the probabilities point to their being produced by trickery, and if one of the men admits that his *are* produced by trickery, then the claim of the other to produce his by spirit-aid is not worth serious consideration. That is the position between myself and the Spirit-Photographers.

HOW I PHOTOGRAPHED
SPIRITS.

In proof of this, I recently asked the Art Editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE to draw up conditions, under which a photograph, if taken, at any rate *ought* to be genuine. These were the conditions he asked for:

1. To provide the plates.
2. To examine the dark slide.
3. To place plate in dark slide.
4. To examine camera, lens, etc., thoroughly.
5. To place dark slide in camera.
6. To take dark slide out of camera after exposure.
7. To develop or watch plate developed.
8. To see a bromide print taken off negative *at once*.
9. Dark slide and camera never to go out of my sight.
10. Background, etc., to be carefully examined and watched by others during exposure.

Now these conditions seem at first sight absolutely fraud-proof. I had, of course, to deal with a man who was an expert in photography; and, moreover, one who would not take anything for granted. In the face of these facts, I, like the "genuine" Spirit-Photographer, would not guarantee success; but I did my best to obtain it. With what result the photographs on this and the following page, and this statement by the Art Editor may be allowed to speak:

The conditions I laid down for the Spirit-Photograph test with Mr. Marriott are set forth above. They seemed to me to provide for all conceivable contingencies of fraud; and they were carefully followed out. Yet on the plates provided by myself and carefully watched throughout the processes of putting in the dark slide and sub-

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.



This photograph, in which the Art Editor of "Pearson's Magazine" appears, together with a Spirit-form and floating "Spirit" flowers, was taken by Mr. Marriott at a seance held under rigid test-conditions, in order to prove that such conditions are no preventive of trickery, even when framed by an expert in photography.

sequent development, various images that, according to all ordinary photographic laws should not have appeared, actually did appear. These images varied from a mere smudge to finished pictures of spirit-forms, faces, and flowers. Perhaps the most striking of all is that reproduced on this page. A bromide proof of this was taken from the negative while still wet, and was initialed by myself within a few minutes of the taking of the photograph; and I am quite unable to say how the spirit-flowers and other "psychic extras" were impressed upon the plate. Evidently there is a loop-hole in the conditions somewhere; but where, I am unable to say. Mr.

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Two further "Spirit" Photographs, taken at Mr. Marriott's test seance, on two consecutive plates exposed. No. 1 was found to contain nothing but the form of the sitter. No. 2 was unaccountably impressed with the forms of a "Spirit" choir. An expert in photography, who watched the proceedings throughout, was unable to detect the trick.

Marriott promised that he would do his best to obtain "Spirit" Photographs on the plates without my discovering how he did it; and he succeeded in doing so.

For once in a way, the Spiritualist theory that he who expects to find trickery *will* find it, did not hold good. I expected to find trickery—but could not. But I don't, in consequence, jump to the conclusion that it was not there.

SEYMOUR NATION.

In addition to the Art Editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, there was present Mr. Charles Matters, who has taken a prominent part in investigating Spiritualistic phenomena in various parts of the world. His testimony is as follows:

We minutely examined all the photographic apparatus, also front and back of a maroon-coloured screen used as a background, and hung on wall. Next we produced a carefully sealed new packet of photo-plates. Then I took my seat on a chair in usual manner. Mr. Marriott did nothing except to place his fingers on the screen, and I carefully examined his hands to ascertain whether phosphorus or chemicals of any kind could be detected. I failed to trace the slightest indication by sight or smell. We all adjourned to a dark room. Gas was, of course, turned low, but a good, ruddy glow alongside developing tank enabled us to see all that was

going on. Not only was the sitter's picture shortly after seen upon the plate, but also other figures thereon. I now wish to certify that every possible precaution was taken on common-sense lines to prevent deception, fraud, or trickery, and I am, therefore, at present quite unable to account for apparent spirit-forms on the plate.

CHAS. H. MATTERS.

I need not embroider the facts set forth in these two statements. I claim that my "Spirit" Photographs are precisely as genuine as any that have ever been produced, and I point to the stringent conditions laid down as my proof. One of the great arguments of Spiritualists in favour of the honesty of various "Spirit" Photographs is based on the fact that photographs have in the past been taken under test-conditions which have satisfied various photographic experts.

Quite recently Wyllie convinced a professional photographer of his powers. Another expert, in the person of the late Mr. Traill Taylor, Editor of the *British Journal of Photography*, was perfectly satisfied that some occult influence was at work. In the course of a lecture, he made the following remarks

regarding the results of experiments made under his supervision by a photographic medium named Duguid:

The psychic figures behaved badly. Some were in focus, others not so; some were lighted from the right, while the sitter was so from the left; some were comely, others not so; some monopolised the major portion of the plate, quite obliterating the material sitters; others were as if an atrociously badly vignetted portrait, or one cut oval out of a photograph by a can opener, or equally badly clipped out, were held up behind the sitter.

But here is the point: not one of these figures, which came out so strongly in the negative, was visible in any form or shape to me during the time of exposure in the camera, and I vouch in the strongest manner for the fact that no one whatever had an opportunity of tampering with any plate anterior to its being placed in the dark slide or immediately preceding development. Pictorially they are vile, but how came they there?

And, being unable to answer the question, Mr. Taylor gave the photographs under discussion a certificate of genuineness. Mr. Taylor's honesty is not, of course, questioned in the least degree; but his attitude is absolutely typical of the average scientific investigator, who is equipped with plenty of technical knowledge, but sadly lacking in imagination. He is hoodwinked; he cannot detect the trickster's method, and, therefore, refuses to believe that he *was* hoodwinked. This is precisely the position of Sir William Crookes, Professor Reichel, Lombroso, Zollner, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, and a score of others. Duguid's "Spirit" Photographs were, needless to say, as fraudulent as my own.

PHOTOGRAPHY WITHOUT A CAMERA.

One of the latest follies in connection with "Spirit" Photography is the theory that the obliging spirits can and will impress an



Another startling test, given by Mr. Marriot: in order to show how adroit manipulation makes apparent miracles possible to the expert "Spirit" Photographer, consisted in impressing a plate in an unopened packet with a written message, which is here reproduced. This is precisely on a par with recent alleged "Spirit" manifestations reported from the north of England.

image or message on one or more plates in an unopened packet, the plates not being exposed in a camera at all.

Under the heading of "Remarkable Spirit-Photography at Crewe," the following paragraphs appeared in a recent issue of *The Two Worlds*:

Several interested Spiritualists at Crewe have been sitting for a considerable period for the purpose of obtaining Spirit-Photographs, and they have been favoured with a large measure of success, both with the

camera and without it. The following recent incident is a remarkable one, as showing how the spirit-friends overcame a sceptic, who, like many others, considered the Spirit-Photographs obtained were not genuine.

The gentleman concerned sent a packet of photographic plates, as purchased from the dealer, after taking precaution to seal the same, as an extra safeguard. Later on he was allowed to be present when the circle sat, so that he could witness the whole procedure. After the meeting was opened with singing and invocation, during which time the packet of photographic plates lay upon the table, the controlling spirit asked the sceptic to say upon which plate he desired a message, and he said, "On No. 5 from the top."

At the close of the meeting the plate was taken from the packet and developed in his presence, when it was found to have on it the following: "See Luke, chapter x, verses 3, 23, and 24."* On referring to the passage, the sceptic was so well satisfied of the genuine result that he wrote a letter to the circle certifying his conviction of the truth. The remarkable point herein is that the message will be found one full of meaning so aptly suitable for the circumstance. Also, for other sceptics, it may be remarked that the other plates in the said

* Luke, chap. x.

3. Go your ways; behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

23. And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately: Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see.

24. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, but have not heard them.

packet were entirely unaffected by the chemical action or actinic force by which the message on the plate was produced. It would be a service to our cause if all friends would report such remarkable instances of spirit-power. Truly it is a poser. Here is a chance for the Marriotts of the conjuring world to whet their wits.

As a matter of fact, I had whetted my wits on this particular problem some time before the publication of the paragraph. During the preparation of this article, I did so again; and a brief account of the proceedings may have points of interest.

Discussing the case with the Editor of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, I told him that the seeming miracle was due to a trick, and a trick, moreover, that was not particularly difficult to work. He asked me if I could work it there and then, and I offered to try. A packet of quarter-plates was obtained direct from a chemist, and, before touching it, I asked on what plate or plates I should produce images. I was requested to impress (1) a message on the third plate from the top, and (2) a spirit-form on the eleventh plate from the top. Here is the Editor's account of what happened:

Mr. Marriott took the unopened packet of plates between his hands, and so held them for a few seconds. He was under the close observation of three people, none of whom could detect anything suspicious in anything he did. The plates were developed within a few hours under the close super-

vision of a member of the staff, out of whose sight they never went; he himself removed them from the packet, and placed them in the developing dish. A message duly appeared before his eyes on plate 3, a "spirit" on plate 11—how or why I am quite unable to fathom, as none of the other plates showed any image whatever. The trick is certainly most ingenious and mystifying, but the mere fact that Mr. Marriott can produce the effect by admitted trickery is in itself sufficient to discount entirely the claims of those who profess to do so by spirit-aid.

I give no explanation in this particular case of the methods by which these tricks can be worked. To do so would be to occupy much space with more or less technical details; it would also be to place additional methods of trickery at the disposal of photographic mediums. This I certainly decline to do.

Meanwhile, I have no doubt that the "remarkable Spirit-Photography" will continue at Crewe and elsewhere, just so long as there are foolish people forthcoming to pay for it. This applies to the whole mass of the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism. A large number of undesirables are at the present moment relying entirely for their daily bread on trickery, and deceiving the unfortunate believers in the actuality of communication with a spirit-world. If the money element were eliminated, Spiritualism would collapse like a pricked bubble. Until it is, wheresoever the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together.



Two crude "Spirit" Photographs from America. They purport to show (1) a Spirit gradually taking shape, and (2) the Spirit after it has assumed definite form.



Part Seven:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 30
Number 177
September 1910

A Test of The Tomsons.

Our exposure of the Tomsons, the "American materialising mediums," in the July number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, led to an offer to Sir Hiram Maxim to make a further investigation of their claims. Naturally we welcomed an independent inquiry by so distinguished a man of science; the fruits of that inquiry have been to corroborate to the full our charges of fraud. We have pleasure in publishing Sir Hiram Maxim's full and interesting story of his investigation, at which he discovered, by close observation and scientific tests, the methods by which Mrs. Tomson "materialises" birds, flowers, and other objects.

BY SIR HIRAM MAXIM.

(Illustrated with photographs specially taken by Mr. E. H. Mills.)

I AM not a Spiritualist, but I am none the less interested in the phenomena and manifestations produced by various Spiritualistic mediums. This interest dates from the time when I witnessed the phenomena of Mr. Fay, which, after lengthy investigation by a party of American investigators, including several conjurers, still remained a mystery. Later, I myself saw similar manifestations produced by others who claimed to be genuine Spiritualists, and I did my level best to arrive at the truth and find out how the tricks—if they were tricks—were performed.

I was unable to do so, and I admitted the fact. When one has devoted the greater part of one's life to scientific investigation, one acquires the habit of telling the truth—even when it might appear more convenient to suppress it.

I mention the Fay phenomena—which still remain a mystery to me, in spite of the fact that Mr. Maskelyne has attempted, but, as I think, unsuccessfully, to duplicate them—because my interest in them led to the investigation which is the subject of the present article.

In a letter from a very prominent gentleman I was told that if I put myself into communication with the Tomsons I would be able to witness demonstrations a hundred

times as mysterious as those I had seen in the States. I was told that the Tomsons were the greatest materialising mediums in the world, and I was assured that Mrs. Tomson had, on many occasions, been stripped of every stitch of her clothing, had been examined by trained nurses and doctors, and on being placed in a cabinet that was proved to be perfectly empty she was able to produce live birds and bouquets of considerable size. I was told that these investigations had been conducted by scientific men in a most thorough manner, and it was arranged that I was to meet the Tomsons and to witness their demonstration privately on the stage of the Alhambra Music Hall.

I accepted the invitation, and found everything in readiness. A canvas cabinet had been improvised by the stage carpenter, and also a small dressing-room of similar construction.

I told those present on that occasion that I did not wish to make any investigation at all. I wished first to see exactly what was presented to the public, and merely to witness the demonstration. I was then asked to search the cabinet, which I did in a very thorough manner. It was quite empty. A very light table and a chair were then placed in the



The black tights in which Mrs. Tomson dressed before putting on the fraud-proof garment devised by Sir Hiram Maxim. Mrs. Tomson professes to take nothing into an empty cabinet and convert it into something, generally flowers, drapery, or a bird.



After being dressed in the fraud-proof garment, Mrs. Tomson was carefully weighed by Sir Hiram Maxim. Her weight was found to be 147½ lb., and—

cabinet, and my assistant kept a close watch to see that no one approached the cabinet.

Mrs. Tomson then entered the dressing-room, and three ladies went in to search her, but the conditions were such that a rigorous search was impossible, thereby robbing the results of the test of any importance.

Mrs. Tomson emerged in a few minutes with one of the ladies on each side, and the other bringing up the rear. So far as I could see, Mrs. Tomson was enshrouded in a cloud of black chiffon. She entered the cabinet and I closed the curtains, and in about two minutes I was asked to open them,

when I found a small white dove, very tame, its feathers ruffled up, its tail feathers being broken and turned in the wrong direction, showing it had been confined in very close quarters. I removed the dove and closed the curtains again. In about three minutes I was asked again to open the curtains, and, on doing so, I found a very large bouquet of flowers, quite fresh and dripping with water. Some of the stalks were fully a foot long, and covered with long and sharp thorns. Mrs. Tomson next showed herself in a cloud of white chiffon in a dim blue light. She then closed the curtains herself, the lights were turned on, and she walked out of the cabinet into the dressing-room.

These "manifestations," however, as I had expected, were produced without any satisfactory searching of Mrs. Tomson, and another test was therefore arranged.

From what I learned from a doctor, a trained nurse, and others, it was only too evident that Mrs. Tomson would not submit

to anything like a thorough search; and, as it was manifestly impossible for me to search her myself, I decided on a method that would require no searching at all. I would inclose her in a garment of woven fabric and chiffon in such a manner as to prevent any article from being removed without making a hole in the garment.

I accordingly went home and myself made a cabinet of three-ply boards, very light and strong. But on taking it into the Alhambra Music Hall I found that the Tomsons would not agree to anything. They insisted on having a table in their dressing-room with a covering



she was then led by Sir Hiram Maxim's assistants into the cabinet, and the curtains were drawn.

made of the usual black cloth and spangled, and also having a very dim light with a dark shadow under the table. They also insisted on Mrs. Tomson wearing petticoats, which they called veiling, but which, on being weighed, were found to be twice as heavy as the skirt worn by Lady Maxim.

I had depended upon weighing the woman before entering the cabinet, and then again afterwards, and I had provided myself with some genuine Fairbank scales of great accuracy for the purpose; but they would not go on unless Lady Maxim destroyed all the notes she had made, which she refused to do. Lady Maxim was very indignant and left; I followed; so there was no demonstration at all. Mr. Moul, the manager of the Alhambra, however, refused to employ the Tomsons at all unless they passed my cabinet test.

It was then arranged that the final test should take place at my Inhaler factory at Norwood.

The cabinet was placed at one end of a long room, and no one allowed to approach it. Mr. Tomson and his son were confined

behind wire netting, and the lady was put into a small room where she was told to remove as much of her clothing as she wished, and to put on some black tights which had been made for her. I was assisted in this matter by my secretary, who has been with me six years, and her sister.

When Mrs. Tomson had put herself into the tights, she stepped out into an adjoining room, where the ladies sewed up the tights closely about her wrists, neck, and at the back. The legs of the tights were provided with feet, so that there was no opening at the ankles. A ribbon was drawn through a band in the neck of the tights and tied, and the knot was sewn together.

Mrs. Tomson was then put into large combinations of red cotton, the seams of which had been very carefully stitched. The garment was then sewn up tightly about the ankles, and very large men's socks drawn over the feet, and the top of the legs carefully stitched to the combinations. The neck of this garment was drawn together by a solid brass chain, which ran through a



After fifty-five minutes the curtains were withdrawn, and Mrs. Tomson was found to have "materialised" a quantity of flowers—which, however, were very much bruised and broken: and also a live snake, about 3ft. long. The explanation was forthcoming—

tubular neckband, and locked at the back with a small padlock having a Yale key.

The back was then laced, and a long strip of material was sewn to the back over the lacing. The garment was sewn tightly about the wrists, and a red ribbon tied tightly around the arm above the elbow, the knots being sewn together. We also passed a ribbon twice around her waist and tied it firmly behind, sewing the knot together.

In order to prevent her taking anything out of her mouth or hair, her head was inclosed in a very well-made, but very fine and light, black chiffon bag; the open end of the bag was bound with ribbon firmly sewn on, and the whole was sewn on to the combinations.

Under these conditions it would certainly be very difficult to remove anything without a trace of the method of removal being left. The two ladies took her by the hands, one on each side, and led her into the testing-room, where she was carefully weighed, her weight being 147 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. She then stepped into the cabinet, and I closed the curtains myself.

From time to time we heard noises inside the cabinet, and the curtains were shaking, showing that there was a good deal going on inside of the cabinet. In exactly fifty-five minutes I was signalled to draw the curtains. On doing so, I found the woman in a most deplorable condition. She had been perspiring to a wonderful extent, and the perspiration had washed the black out of the chiffon. She asked for water, which was given to her, and she drank about two ounces. The whole bottom of the cabinet was littered with fragments of flowers. The flowers were all in bits. There was quite a lot of this *débris* on the table, but when I approached it I was stopped by a rather large live snake, which was found to be 3 feet 6 inches long, and which

weighed 2 lb. Mrs. Tomson was then put on to the scales, and was found to weigh 145 lb., being $2\frac{3}{4}$ lb. lighter than she was when she went into the cabinet. By gathering up the snake and all the fragments of flowers we could get, and placing them on the scales with her, we found the weight to be just over 147 lb. She had lost over half a pound in weight while in the cabinet, and the flowers and snake had, of course, been concealed in her clothes beneath the tights.

The ladies then took her into the dressing-room, and I followed. I found that she had ripped the chiffon veil off the combinations in the front, and made a hole that I could easily put my hand through, and that there was a complete track of where the flowers had come from. She had managed to pull them out around the neck. There were many fragments of flowers inside the chiffon veil around the neck, which I took out myself. I then left the room, and the ladies proceeded to disrobe Mrs. Tomson. She completely broke down and cried, and made a clean breast of the whole thing.

She told the young ladies that she had done her very best, but on account of the strictness of the test she had not made much of a success of it. She said that the snake had been concealed under her arm, that it stopped the circulation, and she thought her arm was paralysed.

The young ladies found that the flowers had been concealed just above the waist, and that many small fragments were still adhering to her bare skin. She had only succeeded in extracting about three-fourths of the flowers that she had concealed in the tights.

The tubular neckband of the special red costume was found to be deeply imbedded into the links of the chain and very much soiled, showing that she had struggled hard and long in removing the snake and the fragments of flowers. Only two or three sweet peas were extracted whole; the other flowers were simply a mass of crushed petals.

I cannot say that the Tomsons are frauds, so far as I am personally concerned. They both assured me over and over again that they were not mediums, that they were not even Spiritualists, and that they did not pre-

tend that their manifestation was anything except a "show." It was presented to me as a pure conjuring trick, and I found it to be such.

I am bound to add, however, that it was originally introduced to my notice as a genuine Spiritualistic manifestation; and I find that it has frequently been so represented to others. For these reasons, I am now making it perfectly clear that it *is* a conjuring trick, and not a very good one at that. But are not all so-called Spiritualistic manifestations in the same category?



—when Sir Hiram examined the medium's clothing and found that the veil had been torn away from the garment, showing how the flowers had been taken from beneath the tights, up through the neck of the garments, and so out into the cabinet. Also she had lost 2 lb. in weight—which was almost exactly accounted for by the weight of the snake and the flowers.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

OCTOBER, 1910.

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[P.T.O.]



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Part Eight:
Pearson's Magazine (UK)
Volume 30
Number 178
October 1910

On the Edge of the Unknown.

TELEPATHY.

An Inquiry into the Possibilities of Thought-Transference—Can Mind Communicate with Mind Otherwise than Through the Senses—Experiments in Mind-Reading—Telepathy on the Stage.

BY WILLIAM MARRIOTT.

(Illustrated with photographs specially taken by Mr. E. H. Mills)

FACTS BASED ON THEORY.

SPIRITUALISM in the main consists, as all the evidence brought forward in the present series of articles has gone to show, in a mass of theory quite unsupported by facts; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that first the theory was formulated, and then "facts"—in the shape of spirit-forms, spirit-messages, and spirit-photographs—were produced to fit it.

With the theory of telepathy it is otherwise. This theory has certainly been built upon a basis of fact. To accord better with the general creed of Spiritualists, it is often distorted and exaggerated beyond all reasonable probabilities. But facts, nevertheless, are on record to show that telepathy—*i. e.* thought-transference by a method beyond the ken of our ordinary senses—is at least a possibility.

The methods in ordinary use by which intelligence is conveyed from one mind to another are manifold. Most elementary of all is a sign or gesture; then comes speed; upon this follows the written message—and so on, until we come to telephonic and telegraphic communication. It may be that telepathy is really no more remarkable or miraculous, in comparison with the latter, than they in their turn are with the cruder modes of communication.

WHAT TELEPATHY MEANS.

By telepathy is meant a communication between the minds of two persons who are situated at a distance, and who do not communicate through any of the known channels. That is practically all that can be

said of it, and it is unreasonable, assuming the existence of telepathy were definitely proved, to jump to the conclusion that, because we do not understand it, it is therefore something occult and uncanny. It is not necessarily more so than wireless telegraphy. Indeed, it is at any rate admissible to imagine a close analogy between the etheric waves that convey the "wireless" messages and the thought waves that link the communicating brains.

It has been said that the theory of telepathy, as presented among the dogmas of Spiritualism, is distorted out of all reasonableness. This is so particularly in one important aspect. Recorded cases of telepathy—I believe all authentic cases—relate to communications between the minds of living people. (Living, that is, at the actual moment of communication, though frequently the sending of the message occurred immediately before the death of one.) Spiritualists apply the theory much further, and believe that the minds of the living can hold communion telepathically with the minds of the dead. Their only grounds for this belief are purely general, and non-evidential communications received by mediums "inspirationally"—which is only another way of saying by telepathy—from the spirit world. Practical tests with a view to proving the genuineness of the communications have always failed—among them the famous "sealed envelope test"—to which reference was made in a former article.

In this case the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, an earnest investigator of psychic matters, left with Sir Oliver Lodge a sealed envelope, of

which the contents were known to himself alone. He promised that after his death he would, if he could, communicate the contents of the envelope through a medium. Had this been achieved, I believe, in view of the nature of the test and the precautions taken, that doubt would have been no longer possible. But though a medium came forward with a message purporting to come from Mr. Myers, it was nothing at all like the message in the envelope, and the test was a failure.

Which, of course, proves nothing in itself. But it does bring home the fact that telepathy between the living and the dead is a theory only.

SPONTANEOUS TELEPATHY.

But to return to the recorded cases of telepathy. The study of the subject under that name is only a modern one; but, to all intents and purposes, telepathy is simply another name for second-sight, the history of which is as old as that of humanity.

For many years the Psychical Research Society has collected authenticated histories of cases of telepathy. It would be impossible in a short article to give any idea of the range and variety of the recorded cases of spontaneous thought-transference, and to discuss the question as to whether they really support the telepathic theory.

But the point I wish to bring out is that they are spontaneous—that is, due to no conscious action of will either on the part of the person transmitting or the one receiving the communication. Telepathy must be conceived as a faculty of the sub-conscious brain—that is, of that part of the intelligence which acts independently of the will.

For those who wish to pursue the study of this side of the subject, the records of the Society for Psychical Research are open; it will be sufficient for my present purpose if I quote one case. It is one chosen as an illustration by Sir Oliver Lodge in his chapter on the subject in "The Survival of Man":

On April 27th, 1880, we were expecting my sister-in-law and her daughter from South America. My wife, being away from home, was unable to meet them at Southampton, so an intimate

friend of the family, a Mr. P., offered to do so. It was between Derby and Leicester, about 3.30 p.m. My wife was travelling in the train. She closed her eyes to rest, and at the same moment a telegram paper appeared before her with the words, "Come at once, your sister is dangerously ill." During the afternoon I received a telegram from Mr. P. to my wife, worded exactly the same and sent from Southampton, 3.30 p.m. to Bedford. On my wife's arrival home, about 9 p.m., I deferred communicating it until she had some refreshment, being very tired. I afterwards made the remark, "I have some news for you," and she answered, "Yes, I thought so; you have received a telegram from Mr. P." I said, "How do you know?" She then told me the contents and her strange experience in the train, and that it impressed her so much that she felt quite anxious all the rest of the journey.

With regard to the above, my wife had no idea of her sister being ill, and was not even at the time thinking about her, but was thinking about her own child she had just left at a boarding school. Also the handwriting my wife saw she recognised at once to be Mr. P.'s. But then, again, he would have been writing on a white paper form, and the one she saw was the usual brown coloured paper.

F. L. L.

Naturally, I do not advance a single case as proof of any theory: I wish to use it rather as an illustration of how the beliefs of Spiritualists magnify a molehill of probable fact into a mountain of positive nonsense.

Assuming that in the case quoted, the premonition as to the telegram was due to a telepathic communication, it is clear that distance is no bar to the transference of a detailed impression. It is equally clear that the communication was purely spontaneous. These facts must be borne in mind in passing to the consideration (1) of the experiments in telepathy, by which investigators have attempted to discover how and under what conditions intentional telepathy is possible; and (2) of the stage-exhibitions of thought-reading, which are frequently so perplexing and mysterious that the man who does not know "how it is done" might well think—and frequently does think—that telepathy has been trained and harnessed as surely as wireless telegraphy.

EXPERIMENTS IN THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE.

Experiments in telepathy have been conducted for many years past by a large number of investigators with varying success, and

simple tests can be tried by anyone who has the requisite patience and interest in the subject.

A simple but instructive test is the following: Let A. take a pack of cards, take a card from it, and concentrate his mind on the value of the card—disregarding suit and colour. B., sitting at some distance from him, blindfolded for preference, endeavours, by keeping his mind in as receptive a state as possible, to catch the impression that A. is striving to convey.

A number of cards should be taken in this way, the results in each case being recorded by A., and after forty or fifty have been tried, it will be interesting to see whether the number of correct guesses by B. are more or less than the mathematical chances would render probable. Obviously, out of every fifty-two cards four should be named correctly on an average by pure guesswork; if two experimenters found, after a continued series of trials, that they got a better result than this, it would point to some unexplained force being at work.

It is, of course, no easy matter to decide how far from the average chance might vary the result. I have experimented on many occasions with this test, and, although I have frequently obtained twice as many correct results as were mathematically to be expected, on other occasions the error has been in the other direction; on balance, I have found a very slight percentage in excess of the probabilities. So slight that it is unsafe to draw any definite deductions from it. At the same time, if this result were confirmed generally by a large number of similar tests, it would go to show that telepathy, although not to be depended upon for a definite result, can exist in a slight degree as the outcome of conscious effort.

Sir Oliver Lodge is one of those who have conducted many telepathic investigations, and a careful record of these is contained in his book already mentioned. There is one unfortunate feature about many of his experiments. Sir Oliver did not, as a rule, himself act either as the transmitter or receiver of the message. This fact introduces the chief difficulty in gauging the value of telepathic tests generally—a difficulty due to the ease

with which collusion between the transmitter and receiver can pass undetected.

Such collusion *can* be rendered impossible; but in most of Sir Oliver's tests the precautions taken were quite inadequate.

For instance, in a series of experiments with two sisters, who were, as he expresses it, "adepts at the 'willing game,'" the card test already described was tried. But the sisters were first allowed to sit close together, their hands being in contact.

The first result was that, out of sixteen cards taken, ten were named correctly—a marvellous result, and one against which the chances were at least ten million to one.

In this case any theory of coincidence may be safely dismissed as quite untenable, and we are left with two possible explanations—collusion and genuine telepathy.

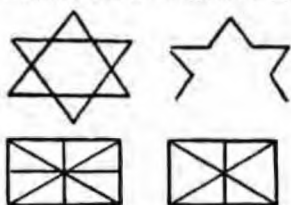
When, however, we find that the result of further tests with these ladies, contact being disallowed, was no more satisfactory than could have been achieved by mere guessing, the case for collusion becomes very much stronger, and the question arises: *How* could the messages have been conveyed fraudulently?

The answer to this is simple. Any two intelligent persons could devise a code of signs—signs so slight and apparently natural as easily to pass unnoticed—that would cover a much wider range of messages than the values of thirteen cards. In the case under notice, it seems almost assured that the signals were conveyed by the hands of the ladies. Without having actually watched the experiments, it is not possible to specify the precise method; and, indeed, probably a long-continued investigation would be necessary in any case, for the possibilities are so manifold. And though, probably, contact was in this case essential to the successful working of the code, it is easily dispensed with, as will appear later on.

"THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE" DRAWINGS.

Among the extended series of tests recorded by Sir Oliver Lodge, are included a number of attempts to convey drawings by telepathy. In these experiments, A. would concentrate his mind on a simple diagram or figure, while B. would endeavour to reproduce

it. Here, of course, there is no mathematical method of calculating the odds against success. They are clearly very large; certainly, in Sir Oliver Lodge's experiment, more successes were obtained than could have occurred by chance. But only in isolated cases does one feel that all possibilities of collusion were eliminated. Often many people were in the room; sometimes the holding of hands was allowed; in a word, clever code-work was generally—perhaps always—possible. This is not to say that it was always used, and the following instances show results which are sufficiently startling to make an uninitiated observer hesitate before classing them all as the outcome of trickery.



Examples of successful "thought-transference" drawings obtained in experiments held by Sir Oliver Lodge. In each case an attempt was made to communicate the idea of the drawing on the left. That on the right shows the result.



In this case an attempt was made by two persons to communicate one each of the first two drawings. The third shows the result obtained—a combination of the two ideas—and a striking success; if collusion were not involved, almost positive proof of the possibility of thought-transference.



The only success obtained in a long series of drawing experiments held by Mr. Marriott during the preparation of this article. Though the idea of the second drawing bears some resemblance to that of the first, coincidence might easily account for such a result.

But whether it is legitimate to make any deduction from these and similar experiments is a question that cannot be answered until we have looked at the results achieved by what may be called "Trick-telepathy."

TRICK-TELEPATHY.

So far as the "thought-reading" exhibitions given from time to time on the music-hall stage are concerned, it might be imagined

that the mere circumstances and atmosphere of the "show" would be sufficient to make any theory of supernormal power ridiculous.

These exhibitions are given as shows pure and simple, and their scientific value is nil. Yet we find Mr. W. T. Stead, whose facility of belief is quite touching, declaring that: "Sir Oliver Lodge would get more proofs of the genuineness of thought-transference by spending half-an-hour with the Zancigs than he would by years of experimenting."

Mrs. Finch, sometime editor of the "Annals of Psychical Science," investigated the Zancigs' powers in 1908, and published a report of the proceedings in the "Annals." It is not necessary to quote it *in extenso*, but an account of some of the experiments, told in her own words, will be illuminating for this reason: that definite results were obtained by them under conditions far more exacting than those imposed by Sir Oliver Lodge in the great majority of his experiments.

The test was held in the flat belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Zancig; the visit of Mrs. Finch and her companion, Miss Scatcherd, was unexpected, and the majority of the experiments were conducted with a closed door between Mr. Zancig and his wife.

EXPERIMENT 1.—Mr. Zancig said to me in a low voice while Mrs. Zancig was near the door and in the act of leaving the room: "*As you don't know how we work, I will just show you first of all; then you can do everything. This won't count, you know.*"

Mr. Zancig called out "Ready" in a loud voice, and as he called out the word he wrote down the figures 50980.

Miss Scatcherd opened the door immediately, and brought in Mrs. Zancig's paper, on which was written 50980.

EXPERIMENT 2.—I wrote down, underneath Mr. Zancig's first figures, the number 6745, and I myself called out "Ready" after Mr. Zancig had drawn my attention to the fact that I had omitted to say that word: "*Call out 'Ready', she won't know when to begin if you don't,*" he said in a whisper.

Almost immediately Miss Scatcherd brought in the paper, on which was written 67890.

Mr. Zancig said: "*That was my fault. I looked at the top number (50 80), and she got confused.*"

EXPERIMENT 3.—Mr. Zancig then said to me, in a low voice, as Miss Scatcherd was leaving the

room: "Let me try an addition," and while speaking he wrote:

57938
05451

33399

The first 3 was at once corrected into a 5, and just as Miss Scatterd opened the door and handed in the paper, Mr. Zancig remarked: "*I have made a mistake; it ought to be a 6.*"

On Mrs. Zancig's paper was written 33399.

This experiment occupied about two minutes.

EXPERIMENT 4.—I took a pack of playing cards belonging to Mr. Zancig, and which the latter got for me, at my request, from a table at the farther end of the room.

I shuffled the cards, and asked Mr. Zancig to call out "*Ready.*" After he had called out the word I handed him a card, which I took at hazard from the pack. It was the nine of diamonds.

Within ten seconds after I had handed the card to Mr. Z., his wife called out "nine of diamonds," and Miss Scatterd, opening the door, repeated: "She says 'nine of diamonds.'"

EXPERIMENT 5.—The card to transmit was the three of spades. This time, whilst I was handing the card to Mr. Z., the four of hearts slipped out of the pack.

I called out "*Ready.*" Mr. Zancig neither moved nor spoke. He held the card in the hollow of his left hand and stared fixedly at it.

Mrs. Zancig called out: "Four of hearts."

"No; try again," said Mr. Zancig.

Mrs. Zancig answered immediately: "Three of spades."

The door was not tightly closed during this experiment, but neither was it open.

Compare these experiments with any of those conducted by Sir Oliver Lodge, and it will be seen that the conditions were more arduous and the results were better. One reason accounts for this fact. Any two amateurs can arrange a code that will enable them to communicate a certain number of messages; it has been practically a life work for Mr. and Mrs. Zancig to evolve a series of codes that can be worked under seemingly hopeless conditions, and can convey whatever information is necessary.

More or less crude exhibitions of thought-reading may be seen on the stage of dozens of music-halls in this country, and provide a simple illustration of the Zancigs' methods.

A., the medium or receiver of the message,

will stand blindfolded on the stage, while the other performer, B., walks among the audience. As soon as an object is handed to B., A. will describe it.

Suppose a watch is handed to B., the "thought-reading" will proceed as follows:

B. What is this?

A. A watch.

B. What kind?

A. A gold watch, half-hunter.

B. Anything else?

A. Yes, the back of the case is engraved, and the watch is a valuable one, fully jewelled.

And so on, down to the giving of the actual number and other minute particulars.

These results are obtained by means of complicated code-work, the code being absolutely familiar to both performers. Each question conveys its own answer. The code is, of course, complicated, and perfect smoothness in working is only obtained by long and arduous practice. The constant asking of questions is in itself suspicious, and it can be dispensed with altogether. "Silent thought-transference" is much more effective as a show, and can be worked under the same conditions as those described. One point, however, is important. The blindfolding of A. on the stage is only apparent: he or she can in reality follow quite well the movements of B., for in these movements lie the code. It is difficult to give in a short space an adequate idea of the tremendous range of information that can be conveyed by quite simple codes. But imagine that the performers have each, in the first place, memorised ten lists of ten messages each—a hundred messages in all—and that they have then devised two codes of ten signals each; by means of them they can communicate any one of the hundred messages. For instance, if the required message is the eighty-third, the signal in the first code would be "8"; that in the second, "3"—thus signifying the third article in the eighth list. This system can be worked with extraordinary certainty and smoothness after sufficient practice, and can be extended to a far greater number of messages than a hundred.

So long as the performers are within sight of each other, sign-codes such as those



How thought-reading is accomplished for stage purposes. A performer on the stage, apparently blind-folded, reads the thoughts of a confederate among the audience. The messages are actually conveyed by two series of codes, ten lists of messages having previously been committed to memory by both performers. In the first photograph the position of the performer's head signifies "4," that of his right hand "1," this meaning the fourth message in the first list, i.e., a watch. Similarly, in the second picture, the position of head signifies "8," the hand in pocket "4," that is the eighth message in the fourth list, i.e., a pipe.

shown in the photographs can be employed with certainty. When they are *not* within sight, other methods must be employed; but it may be taken as an axiom that trick-telepathy is not possible when the performers are out of both sight and hearing of each other, and on premises they had been unable to prepare.

In Experiment 4, with the Zancigs, quoted on the previous page, the first two conditions were apparently assured. But only apparently. The third was not. There are two possible ways in which this effect could be produced: one by sound signals, such as stepping, chair-moving, coughing, etc.; the other by a simple electrical "tapper" working under the floor from Mr. Zancig's foot to that of his wife. Which device was used I don't pretend to say, but the same proposition applies to telepathic "phenomena" as to all other occult happenings. So long as a normal explanation will fit the facts, it is

absurd to seek for a supernormal one. And just as it is possible to find a normal method by which the Zancigs might work their apparent miracles, so it is possible to explain away almost all, if not absolutely all, the successful results of experimental telepathy. It is this fact that makes reserve in dealing with them so necessary.

THE WILLING GAME.

Most of us have at some time or another taken part in this pastime which was once more fashionable than it is to-day. The company think of something they would like one of their number to do while he is out of the room. He comes in and takes the hand of one of the company, and more or less quickly does what is required. Of course, this is often crudely worked with a confederate, but surprising effects can be brought off without having recourse to any such device.



In the same way, the signals in the first of these pictures convey that the object is a coin; in the second, a pocket-book. By continuing the signals, further particulars of both objects could be added. This method of code-signalling requires long practice before it can be used with certainty in public; but any two amateurs after one or two private trials will see how bewildering is the effect of this form of trick-telepathy on an audience of friends.

It is simply a case of remaining passive and allowing the other person to lead you through what you are expected to do. You will find they will do it quite naturally and without knowing it, though you, of course, must not be obstructive but keep keenly on the alert for hints which will be freely given if you know how to interpret them.

This idea is really the basis of the thought-reader's feats, which were so popular some years ago, and still form quite an interesting entertainment. Here is an example.

The thought-reader leaves the room while the audience select a pin, with which a hole is made in the wall and the pin hidden somewhere. The thought-reader, blindfolded, enters, and, taking some person's hand first, finds the pin; then the hole in the wall, and inserts the pin therein. Properly worked, this has all the appearance of genuine telepathy. It

is, of course, nothing of the kind. The success of the experiment depends on the ability of the thought-reader to read the signs that will certainly be given him. The basis is "following the line of least resistance," and taking note of every sign your leader gives you as well as of what the audience give you. It is merely muscle-reading; and, simple as it sounds, extraordinary results can be achieved.

Spiritualists, like Mr. Stead, who believe telepathy to be a spiritual phenomenon, will assert that pseudo-thought-transference, like that described, is merely an imitation of the real thing. This may conceivably be so; but, if it *is* so, it is strange that the imitation produces results more startling and infinitely more certain than the genuine.

So far as the thought-readers themselves are concerned, I am not for a moment suggesting that they are in the same class as the fraudulent mediums encountered in Spiritualism. For them "thought-transference"



Another species of thought-reading, sometimes described as the "willing game." Here the audience decides on some action to be done by the performer: the latter, blindfolded, then takes the hand of one of the audience—



— and proceeds to act in accordance with what was previously decided on in the picture, stabbing a chair with a hat-pin. This is really not thought-reading at all, but muscle-reading. Exactly how it is done is explained in the article.

is merely a means of livelihood, and they seldom claim occult powers. When they do, I believe it is practically always on account of the absurd ideas put into their heads by Spiritualists, who literally tempt them to pose as possessing real telepathic powers.

In dealing with Spiritualistic phenomena generally, we find mediums imposing on credulous Spiritualists; in thought-transference, I am inclined to think that the thought-readers are the victims.

SUMMING UP.

To sum up, then, what are we to say of telepathy? Are we to reject it absolutely or to accept it as a theory that is uncertain in practice?

I believe the latter is the only reasonable course. It is impossible to explain away all the recorded cases of spontaneous telepathy; just as it is unreasonable to claim that the possibility of intentional thought-transference has been definitely proved by any of the experiments held by investigators.

But it is safe to say that the theory of telepathy, as believed in by the majority of Spiritualists, that is, by all who profess to be mediums or clairvoyants, or to have spirit guides, is, on the facts, untenable; simply because no case of undoubted communication between living and dead has ever been proved.

The farthest that one can go in the matter of belief is this: Spontaneous telepathy does probably occur occasionally, under special conditions which it is impossible to define; with equal probability applied telepathy is an *ignis fatuus*, leading nowhere in a wild pursuit of nothing. A sense of proportion—which is, when all has been said, the most valuable asset of the investigator in dealing with all visionary theories and occult beliefs—must tell us that the world, with telepathy an established fact of every day, would be an impossible place. Many of those who cannot realise this fact have never looked at it in the right light. It is a case where, perhaps, an analogy may be permissible. Conceive a bridge-table with players who are adepts in telepathy, and you will see on a small scale what the world would be on a great one.