

Chapter 4 — The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism

from *The Truth About Spiritualism* (1923)

by

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Sources for Chapter 4, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) E. E. Slosson, “Mediums and Tricksters,” in *Scientific Monthly*, September 1922, pp. 285, 287
- (2) Harry Price and Eric J. Dingwall (editors), *Revelations of a Spirit Medium* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1922 ed.)

Note: This book was originally published in 1891 as *Revelations of a Spirit Medium; or, Spiritualistic Mysteries Exposed*, by A. Medium. The author is suspected to be C. F. Pidgeon.
- (3) Joseph McCabe, *Is Spiritualism Based on Fraud?: The Evidence Given by Sir A. C. Doyle and Others Drastically Examined* (London: Watts & Co., 1920)
- (4) David P. Abbott, *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*, Fifth Revised Edition (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1916)
- (5) Houdini, “Ghosts That Talk—by Radio,” in *Popular Radio*, October 1922, pp. 100-107
- (6) Hereward Carrington, Ph.D., *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism: Fraudulent and Genuine* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1920)
- (7) Isaac K. Funk, D.D., LL.D., *The Psychic Riddle* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1907)
- (8) E. H. Jones, Lt. I.A.R.O. with illustrations by C. W. Hill, Lt. R.A.F., *The Road to En-dor: Being an Account of How Two Prisoners of War at Yozgad in Turkey Won Their Way to Freedom* (New York: John Lane Company, 1920)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.
- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (g) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source.

Matthew Block
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[Compare McCabe 1.]

[Sir Arthur Conan Doyle meets the difficulty by cheerfully distinguishing between white, black, and grey mediums: the entirely honest, the entirely fraudulent, and those who have genuine powers, but **cheat** at times when their powers flag and the sitters are impatient for “manifestations” (McCabe 5).]

[?]

IV — THE PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM

4:0.1 THE trail of modern spiritualism, since its inception at Hydeville three-quarters of a century ago, is strewn with the spectacle of the rise and downfall of a succession of “marvelous mediums.” One by one these unique personalities have moved into the limelight of public interest, only sooner or later to be caught cheating and to be in their turn detected in fraud. Again and again have the faithful believers been forced to view the downfall of their favorite medium—their chosen idol.

4:0.2 Of course, it is explained by the “pillars” of the spiritualistic faith that even good mediums, sometimes, in their effort to secure bread and butter—in their desire to cater to the insatiable desire of the public for “manifestations,” succumb to the temptation to **cheat**, to practice fraud in some minor direction; but it is affirmed that over and above all this fraudulent element many of these mediums are real channels of communication between the living and the dead.

4:0.3 Since the early phenomena of rapping spirits—or the snapping toes of Margaret Fox—spiritistic phenomena embracing a series of seance “stunts” ranging from roping, tying, and slate-writing, to materialization, have been successfully introduced by the earlier mediums, such as Home, Eddy Brothers, Mrs. Cobb, Foster, Henry Slade, and the Davenport Brothers.

1. THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE SEANCE

“MEDIUMS AND TRICKSTERS”
(Slosson)

4:1.1 If there are genuine mediums—
that is,

[contd] Those who believe in spiritistic phenomena call upon their opponents to disprove their hypothesis, and hold, rightly enough, that if ninety-nine mediums are merely tricksters, it does not prove that **the hundredth** is not genuine.

if **one out of a hundred** is as the wheat among the chaff, the gold in the midst of the dross—

It is, of course, impossible to prove the universal negative of such a proposition. We can merely say that if spirits do return, it is **extremely unfortunate** that they can only return

then it is indeed **extremely unfortunate** that the spirits of our departed friends find it **inconvenient** to return to our old world

and communicate with us only

under those conditions which are most favorable for deception (S 285).

under those conditions which lend themselves so favorably to fraud and deception.

For instance,

[contd] What these conditions are we can learn from the practices of amateur and professional conjurers. **Let us approach the matter** from another starting point than is usually adopted.

let us look at this matter for a moment from the standpoint of the cunning **trickster** and the wilful deceiver.

Instead of speculating as to how departed spirits would manifest themselves to us, a matter which can know nothing about, let us consider what a **trickster** would do if he wished **to deceive the public into thinking that he was possessed of spirit power**, a matter on which we have unfortunately a great deal of information.

What conditions would he impose? What methods would he use? The following are the chief characteristics of such fraudulent manifestations:

(1). **Darkness.**

The less the light the more remarkable the manifestations is the general rule (S 285-87).

[contd] (2). **Distraction of attention.**

This is the chief reliance of the **parlor and stage magician.**

The most striking things in the seance room occur after the sitters are tired of watching (S 287).

Suppose we started out on a program deliberately **to deceive the public into thinking we possessed the powers of spiritistic mediumship.**

First we must recognize the fact that the public possesses little real information of a scientific character concerning these phenomena, and that, therefore, everything would be favorable to the practice of fraudulent methods.

To further enhance our ability to deceive, it would seem well for us to impose the following conditions:

4:1.2 a. *Absence of light—more or less complete **darkness.***

The less illumination we have upon the scene of our performances, the more secure against detection would be our fraudulent practices.

4:1.3 b. ***Diversion of attention.***

To distract the attention we know to be one of the trump cards of both the **parlor magician and the professional sleight-of-hand performer;**

and it has been our observation that

the most phenomenal things occur in the seance chamber, as a rule, after the sitters are tired out by expectant listening and watching,

or otherwise have had their powers of attention either partially exhausted or cleverly diverted.

SOURCE

[contd] (3). **Unexpectedness.** (S 287)

The feats of the conjuror—and of the medium—are capricious and unforeseen.

That is why trickery can not be guarded against by precautions in advance (S 287).

[contd] (4). **Control of conditions.**

The conjurer and the mediums alike insist on having lights, furniture, sitters and apparatus arranged to suit themselves.

On the other hand, the primary requisite of an experiment is the control of conditions.

It is therefore, incorrect to speak of experiments with mediums.

They are usually merely observations, and that under circumstances most unfavorable to correct observation (S 287).

(6). Concealment.

A prestidigitator for his most difficult tricks requires some kind of a table, shelf or screen,

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4:1.4 c. *The element of surprise.*

The psychology of the unexpected would be utilized by any performer who would seek to deceive and mystify the observer.

The feats of the professional conjurer and of the spirit medium are often unexpected and unforeseen,

and that is why it is quite impossible to take advance precautions against deception and trickery.

4:1.5 d. *Control of conditions.*

The magician and the medium alike insist on controlling and manipulating the arrangement of all lights, furniture, and even the order of the sitters in the seance room.

Now, it is a well-known fact that, from a scientific standpoint,

the fundamental requisite for reliable experimentation is the complete control of conditions;

therefore, in no sense can a real scientific experiment be conducted with spiritualistic mediums.

Such tests are merely observations, and at that, under conditions and circumstances highly inimical to reliable and correct observation.

4:1.6 e. *Concealment.*

The magician on the stage, in the performance of his more difficult tricks, always makes use of some sort of a table, a shelf, or a screen,

but he rarely demands so convenient a shelter as the medium's cabinet or curtain (S 287).

(5). Suggestion.

This is the main reliance of the magician, next to distraction of attention.

He palms a coin while pretending to throw it into a hat or into the air.

Our eyes follow the motion of his hand and interpret it according to the intent (S 287).

(7). Tied or held hands.

The releasing of hands and feet when they are bound, knotted and sealed is the cheapest of tricks. I have seen a man handcuffed by a policeman, tied in a bag and thrown into the river,

yet he came to the surface promptly with his hands free (S 287).

but he seldom dares to employ such a complete mode of concealment as the medium utilizes in the conventional cabinet or curtain.

The magician seldom resorts to the complete hiding of his person during an experiment.

4:1.7 f. *The power of suggestion.*

Suggestion is one of the main methods employed by the magician, next to distracting the attention of his audience,

looking toward a proper preparation of the minds of his observers for the finished performance of the trick.

The conjurer palms the coin while he pretends to throw it into the air,

the eye follows the motion of his hand, and suggestion is thereby utilized to aid in the deception.

4:1.8 g. *Tying, or holding hands.*

This sort of trick has been so frequently exposed that we no longer marvel at

seeing a man handcuffed and tied in a bag, or even thrown into a river,

when he bobs up serenely with hands and feet, which were previously tied, loosened.

SOURCE

(9). Emotional excitement.

An experimenter must preserve a cool and somewhat detached demeanor.

Now, even the most convinced skeptic can not witness unmoved such violations of natural law as these, purporting to prove the existence of another world, and especially the presence of his deceased friends and relatives.

The photographs taken of the seance room show us not merely that the table is suspended in mid air, but that the witnesses, watching it with bulging eyes, open mouths and strained attention, are incapable of critical observation (S 287).

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4:1.9 h. Emotional expectancy, curiosity, and excitement.

The environment of an individual watching a magician in a theatre is that of an unbiased investigator—

a detached observer;

but the phenomena of a darkened seance room are all contrary to these requisites of scientific investigation. They all appeal to superstition and the emotions;

the discussion of messages from dead friends and relatives,

in fact the whole atmosphere of spiritualism is such as to appeal to the emotions and awe of the supernatural rather than to reason and logic, to feed curiosity rather than to foster accurate judgment

and correct observation.

[contd] In these nine points and others the conditions of successful trickery and the conditions of the seance are the same (S 287).

4:1.10 We see, therefore, that if we should start out deliberately to arrange a program of deception, if we would purposely supply ourselves with all the tools, conditions, and environment favorable to fraud, we would do only what the mediums do under their alleged spirit dictation when they turn off the light and otherwise arrange the seance environment so that it constitutes the ideal conditions favorable to the perpetration of fraud.

2. MANUAL DEXTERITY — SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

4:2.1 Many of the outward manifestations accompanying the seances of the lower grade commercial mediums are nothing more nor less than sleight-of-hand tricks. Many of the more common spiritistic phenomena are the result of manual dexterity. If the magician is able to deceive the eye of his audience on a brilliantly lighted stage, how much more easy for the medium to practice this sort of deception in the dimly lighted rooms—and sometimes they even favor themselves by moments of complete darkness.

4:2.2 Several years ago I knew an individual who had ambitions to become a magician, but not being a prestidigitator of a high order he made little headway in his chosen profession, and so he decided to become a “psychic.” He sprang into prominence instantly, and within a few years had not only acquired a big reputation but had amassed an equally large fortune.

He explained to me one time, in strictest confidence, that his tricks were so much more influential when they were enshrouded with the atmosphere of the supernatural, and when they had added to them the further interest which, he explained to me, “all people have in spooks and spirits.”

4:2.3 It seems seldom to dawn upon the mind of the general public that spiritualistic performers might have taken the pains and precaution to have surrounded themselves with

[In addition to the above there are certain members of each spiritualistic community who make a business of acting as confederates for mediums.... You would be surprised were you once behind the scenes, as a performer, to know how many apparently respectable persons at a seance are secretly confederates of the medium (Abbot 271).]

well-trained and reliable confederates. But investigation shows that they do this very thing.

Many of the more successful of our modern fortune tellers, clairvoyants and mediums have maintained a large working organization, embracing numerous male and female confederates.

4:2.4 Not long ago I had for a patient a woman who had been for many years employed as hand-maiden to one of our well known mediums, and in delineating to me the story of her life, which was indeed very interesting, I not only learned the details of the manner in which she served and assisted her mediumistic employer, but learned also that there were no less than half a dozen such persons employed in connection with the more elaborate seances.

4:2.5 *Mechanical Apparatus.*

I remember very well, twelve or fifteen years ago, when a certain patient came to consult me about his health, and when on inquiring about his business—whether his time was spent indoors or out of doors, etc., he replied by telling me that he was a manufacturer of apparatus for magicians and mediums. Now, I knew that magicians must carry a very large equipment, for it had been my privilege to know two or three of the leading magicians of the present time, and I had learned much of their methods and work, and I knew of the vast army of helpers they must have to arrange their performances and the enormous amount of paraphernalia and apparatus which they carried in order to produce their entertaining effects. But I confess it was a shock to me to know that the manufacture of apparatus for mediums was a business,

[The sensible man will remember that behind the mediums is the same ingenious industry which supplies conjuring outfits (McCabe 118).]

and that it was carried on in connection with the manufacture of this same sort of appliances for use by professional magicians.

4:2.6 It will be observed that the high class mediums, who pull off the more marvelous stunts, must needs always perform amid their own surroundings. They cannot do these things out in the open. Everything must be carefully staged.

SOURCE

[Mr. Armstrong says that on several occasions he succeeded in raising the table without contact. It rose to the fingers held over it at a height of several inches, like the keeper of a strong electro-magnet (Bennett 27).]

[As the “medium” did not invite an investigation of his pockets, none was made. A twenty-five cent “medium” could not be expected to submit to such indignities and reflections on his uprightness (Price 86).]

SPIRITUALISTIC MYSTERIES EXPOSED. (Price 1)

The writer was now “in it” all over. His “seances” were equally as wonderful as the one he had first witnessed. He could now have the instruments floating about in space over the top of the “cabinet” without visible support. He had, also, a guitar that would *play on itself* and was a wonderful instrument in more ways than one (P 115).

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The author well remembers the case of Madam X, who, in connection with a performance in which the table was dancing about rather lightly in obedience to the raising and lowering of her arms—when, to my mind, the most simple explanation would be the employment of electro-magnetic force of some sort, since I noticed she was very careful to furnish her own table for this demonstration—I proposed to this medium that she allow my wife to take her into an adjoining room where she should undress and allow her clothing to be examined. This she refused to do. Next I proposed that I subject her table to an X-ray observation and this she also refused.

She could not have her consecrated furniture subjected to such skeptical indignity.

And so I could recite scores of cases in which the mediums refused to submit to real examination and scrutiny by mechanical and electrical experts.

4:2.7 The initiated among mediums and conjurers know where to go to buy

the self-playing guitar which is such a helpful addition to a medium’s tools of deception.

His guitar was an innocent appearing but wonderful affair.... One of the panels on the large end of the instrument could be displaced

leaving an aperture sufficiently large to comfortably insert the hand and fore-arm. Inside it was arranged for holding various articles, in such a way as to be impossible of discovery except through the defective panel.

Besides this the machinery from a small one-tune spring music box had been affixed to the wood forming the top, just under the strings (P 115-16).

In this guitar was kept the flowing robes with which the “spooks” were clothed. The robes were of white netting so very fine that enough of it ... can be carried in a hollow boot-heel to dress up a [spirit] with an abundance of clothing.

In the other boot-heel can be carried an assortment of netting-masks with which to transform your own face half-a-dozen times (P 117).

Guitars are also made for mediums in which

one of the panels can be removed,

and one such instrument can become the hiding place for a vast amount of mediumistic paraphernalia.

Guitars may in this way also have placed within them

the mechanism of a small music box.

4:2.8 Still another medium kept

a robe large enough to simulate a spirit’s return in a hollow boot heel,

while in the heel of the other shoe he kept an assortment of netting masks with which he could effect almost a dozen face transformations.

One medium who had been repeatedly searched by investigating committees was finally caught. The peculiar luminous mask with which he covered his face was at last discovered concealed within the body of

The writer has also carried effective apparatus in his elegant gold watch. The watch was without a movement, and a watch only in appearance (P 119).

VII: MESSAGES FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD (McCabe 109)

In a work specially devoted to this subject (*Spirit Slate Writing and Kindred Phenomena*, 1899) Mr. W. E. Robinson gives about thirty different fraudulent ways of getting spirit-messages.... One method, for instance,

is to write a message with invisible fluid on paper,

seal the apparently blank paper in an envelope,

and then

let the message appear and pretend that the spirits wrote it.

a gold watch case which was minus its works.

3. INVISIBLE WRITING

4:3.1 One of the common methods employed, up to the present time, of getting spirit messages,

and one which I have seen most cleverly perpetrated by a number of mediums,

is to write the alleged spirit message on a piece of paper with any one of the many known invisible writing fluids,

and then before the eyes of the sitter the medium will

seal this apparently blank piece of paper in an envelope

which the investigator can hold with his own hands,

and then after the lapse of a certain length of time the envelope can be opened

and the spirit message will be clearly visible.

SOURCE

Mr. Robinson gives thirty-seven different recipes for this “invisible ink,”

and sixteen of these require only heat, which is easily applied, to develop them.

In other cases the inside of the envelope has been moistened with a chemical solution which develops the hidden writing.

One medium used to put an apparently blank sheet of paper in a clear bottle and seal it.

Here trickery seemed impossible, and the sitter was greatly impressed at receiving a pious message on paper.

But the message had been written in advance with a weak solution of copper sulphate,

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4:3.2 Almost half a hundred different recipes for invisible writing fluid are in use by the mediums of this country,

and we have been able to collect the formulae for almost this number,

more than a dozen of which require only the application of a little heat to develop them;

and with still others the inside of the envelopes can be so treated that the invisible writing will appear

within a few minutes after the paper is inserted in these specially prepared containers.

4:3.3 Some time back a certain medium attracted considerable attention by putting a blank piece of paper in a large, wide-mouthed bottle, securely corking the bottle,

and allowing the investigator to hold it in his own hands, and within a few minutes

the alleged spirit message would appear in a plainly visible and beautiful handwriting.

This was a very impressive “stunt” until another medium in possession of the secret disclosed its technique, and now we can all produce the same spirit messages by

writing on the paper with a weak solution of copper sulphate, in advance,

then stopping it up securely in

SOURCE

and the bottle had been washed out with ammonia,

which develops it (M 116).

HALF HOURS WITH THE MEDIUMS.

(Abbott 1)

V. The Mystic Oracle of the Swinging Pendulums, or Mind over Matter.—A Rapping Hand.—Light and Heavy Chest. (Abbott 1)

Another medium had a model of a lady's hand.... The spectators were seated in a circle, and four of them held a large swinging glass plate by four ribbons attached to its corners. They held this plate so that when it hung down between them, it really formed a level table some six inches above the floor; and it was supported merely by the aforesaid ribbons in the sitter's hands.

On the glass table the hand was placed.

This hand was evenly balanced so that a slight pressure applied on its fingers would cause it to tilt forward and tap the plate.

Now if the sitters sat quietly and asked this hand any questions whatever, it would reply correctly by tapping on the plate (A 33-34).

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a bottle that has just been washed out with a solution of ammonia—

enough of the gas of which is left in the bottle to develop the writing.

4. ELECTRIC PHENOMENA

4:4.1 Magnets have been used very liberally by the more expert mediums in accomplishing their wonders.

One medium operated on a glass table suspended by four ribbons.

A cast of a hand was placed on this piece of glass.

The hand was carefully and evenly balanced so that the least tilt would cause the fingers to tap upon the glass.

Any question asked by a sitter would be promptly answered by the hand.

All could be thoroughly examined;

You could thoroughly examine the hand at any time, and the experiment was conducted throughout in broad daylight. You could examine the suspended glass and the tapping hand while it was working;

and the usual thread, that so many performers use, was impossible in this case, owing to the conditions (A 34).

no threads or wires were present.

Performances of this sort are conducted by means of an electro-magnet thrown into and out of the field by an assistant in an adjoining room who hears the questions.

[contd] The secret is an old one.... In the fingers was a soft iron. Under the floor was a powerful electro-magnet. The medium's assistant from an adjoining room listened to the questions through a concealed tube;

The fingers of the hand model contained a core of soft iron,

and at the proper time he pressed a button, sending into the magnet the current which was strong enough to draw down the fingers and cause the hand to rap (A 34).

and the confederate who listened to the questions merely pressed a button to cause the hand to give the desired number of taps in answer to any and all questions.

ADDENDA. (Abbott 320)

WIRELESS ELECTRICITY FOR MEDIUMISTIC TRICKS. (Abbott 330)

4.4.2 I have been recently told of

[contd] I must also make mention here of a talking table, that a person of whom I know is completing at this writing.

a conjurer who has produced a little table that will give spirit messages.

The table may be taken apart and put together by the investigator, and nothing suspicious will be found. He then asks questions of the spirits, and holds his ear to the table for the reply. The table replies in human language, but the sounds are quite indistinct and ghostly (A 330).

[contd] The table may be taken to any room, and everything searched and examined; yet it will work just the same (A 330-31).

All of my readers may not know that if a coil of wire be run secretly around a room, either under the floor or in any other concealed position; and if a telephone transmitter be attached to it from some other building; that a telephone which is not connected by any wires whatever, but that is simply located anywhere within the coil, will repeat all words spoken into the transmitter. This is not wireless telephony, but is simply a case of induction...

Now, the man who is making this table to which I have referred, uses this principle. He runs a secret coil around each room,

and puts the receiver in the top board of the table, the center portions of which are hollow.

In fact, the top of the table appears to be veneered, and is quite thin. He pours melted paraffine in the hollow around the apparatus,

so as to hold it steady and make all parts sound alike (A 331).

You put your ear down to the top of the table and you hear it talk,

yet you can examine the table at will.

The table is in a room that is wired for "induction" effects,

while within the top of the table is placed a telephone receiver.

Around the receiver melted paraffine is poured,

which gives the same note as the rest of the table which has a veneered top and gives no hollow sound at any spot.

SOURCE

He conceals two or three transmitters behind ornaments in each room, and any words spoken in the rooms are carried to the distant confederate (A 331).

The same man I have just mentioned, is also experimenting with a view to using Hertzian waves of wireless telegraphy, for moving distant objects without mechanical contact; and for controlling the motions of distant objects. Of course these objects must have a preparation that can not be discovered. At this writing I can not say just how he will succeed.

He has also stated that he will produce in a room what he calls “Whispering or Echoing Voices,” which will be voices in the very air of the room.

He also says he thinks it possible to cause a sheet of paper or card held in the operator’s hand, to speak and act like a telephone diaphragm (A 332).

In such case I would think that the sheet of paper must be double, and have within it a very thin sheet of iron (A 332).

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Several annunciators are placed in the wall carrying questions to a confederate in an adjoining room,

who in turn transmits his answers to the top of the table in due time.

4:4.3 In the near future we shall no doubt be treated to phenomena that are due to real wireless telegraphy and telephony.

There is no reason why mediums should not use these as they have the more simple and older technique of days gone by.

One experimenter has already been reported as working on the construction of a “whispering gallery”

in which the operator can stand and have voices emanate from a blank piece of cardboard which will serve the practical purpose of a transmitter,

or perhaps a piece of cardboard—apparently—which contains a thin metallic sheet between its layers.

4:4.4 *How one Medium became famous.*

“GHOSTS THAT TALK—BY RADIO”
(Houdini 100)

Perhaps you who are reading this article may attend the seance of a medium as clever as the woman who became nationally famous as a result of her work one evening in a western city (H 106).

[contd] While she was in the midst of her communion with the shades of those present, she stopped short.

“I see a man murdered!” she exclaimed.

Then she described a violent death scene,

giving the name of the man and the address in the city where he was actually murdered a few minutes before she received the “spirit message.”

The newspapers confirmed her statements and later spread her fame throughout the country (H 106).

[contd] From that time on people paid ridiculous prices for her services—until she was exposed (H 106).

[contd] The secret of her spiritualistic demonstration was simple.

A radio antenna in the sole of her shoe received impulses from a transmitting antenna in the rug upon which she stood,

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4:4.5 The secret of her spiritualistic demonstration was simple.

A radio antenna in the sole of her shoe received impulses from a transmitting antenna in the rug upon which she stood,

and conveyed them to a sensitive head phone hidden in a large bouquet of flowers on her shoulders.

A reporter had telephoned the news of the murder to her confederate behind the scenes, who transmitted it by radio telephone.

The receiver concealed in the flowers was not loud enough for the audience to hear,

but when the medium leaned her head upon the flowers she could hear it distinctly (H 106-07).

[contd] Her feat was a blow she had been aiming at sceptics for some time.

She had placed her reporters at police stations, hospitals and newspaper offices to wait for the news of a death by violence which would receive space in the papers (H 107).

XXI: THE MEDIUMSHIP OF D. D. HOME (Carrington 372)

§4. *The "Fire Tests"* (Carrington 399)

We now turn to consider another phase of the mediumship exhibited through Home, and in some ways the most remarkable, in others the most suspicious, of them all. I refer to the so-called "fire tests"; to those cases, *i.e.*, where it is reported that the medium is enabled to take from the fire, and handle with impunity, live coals;

and conveyed them to a sensitive head-phone hidden in a large bouquet of flowers on her shoulders.

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She had placed her reporters at police stations, hospitals, and newspaper offices to wait for the news of a death by violence which would receive space in the papers.

4:4.6 *Fire Eaters.*

Mediums are often observed (like Home) to show their supernatural powers by

handling live coals of fire

to handle heated lamp-chimneys without harm;

to pass handkerchiefs through the flame of a candle without it in any way injuring the fabric... (C 399).

There are preparations that may be applied to the hands that will protect them from great heat for a considerable time.

One of these preparations is the following, which I give on the authority of the author of *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium*.

“Dissolve one-half ounce of camphor in two ounces of aqua vitæ;

add one ounce of quicksilver, and one ounce of liquid styrax, which is the product of the myrrh, and which prevents the camphor from igniting.

Shake and mix well together.

Bathe the inside of the hand and the fingers in this preparation, allowing it to dry in,

and you can duplicate the performance with the lamp-chimney, and hold your fingers in the blaze quite a while without any bad effects” (p. 98) (C 402).

or otherwise playfully juggling highly heated objects—

lamp chimneys, etc.

Still other objects, such as handkerchiefs and neckties are passed through a flame without burning.

Many formulae have been devised for temporarily fire-proofing one’s hands or other objects so as to stand considerable heat and blaze without damage.

One successful medium, long before the American public, gives the following formula for accomplishing this purpose:

“Dissolve one-half ounce of camphor in two ounces of aquavitæ;

add one ounce of quicksilver and one ounce of liquid styrax, which is the product of myrrh, and which prevents the camphor igniting.

Shake and mix well together.”

Bathe the inside of the hand and the fingers in this preparation, allowing it to dry on,

and you can duplicate the performance with the hot lamp chimney and hold your fingers in a blaze quite a while without any bad effect.

5. TRICKS OF THE SEANCE ROOM

4:5.1 You must not forget that commercial mediums are expert sleight-of-hand performers.

APPENDIX: CORRESPONDENCE WITH INQUIRERS THROUGH "THE OPEN COURT." (Abbott 266)

A PUZZLING CASE. (Abbott 280)

One has but to witness Kellar, the magician, on the stage using his best spirit tie, to realize the possibilities of this art. The committee tie his hands behind him very tightly;

yet he will instantly bring either hand forward and exhibit it, place it behind himself, and turn his back; when his hands will be seen to be tied together as tightly as ever (A 284).

MEDIUMISTIC SEANCES. (Abbott 266)

There are dealers who sell to mediums secrets which give them instructions for performing their work (A 273).

They are able to have their hands tied behind their backs and, just like the magician, Keller, Thurston and others,

would be able to show you their hands free if the lights were turned on;

but in the darkness of the seance room they are able to produce the many wonders which are regarded by the sitters as spirit manifestations.

They know where to buy all the paraphernalia needed to carry on their work.

There are dealers right here in Chicago who sell this stuff.

V: A CHAPTER OF GHOSTLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (McCabe 77)

Quite recently Mr. Sidney Hamilton described in *Pearson's Weekly* (February 28, 1920) an "illustrated printed catalogue of forty pages" which he had with great difficulty secured.

It was the secret catalogue of a firm which supplies apparatus to mediums (M 91).

VIII: SPIRIT POSTS, SACKS, HANDCUFFS, ETC. (Carrington 168)

[See C 173.]

APPENDIX: CORRESPONDENCE WITH INQUIRERS THROUGH "THE OPEN COURT." (Abbott 266)

A PUZZLING CASE. (Abbott 280)

At one time I fitted up my home with a number of mechanical rappers under the floor in different positions.... I had most marvelous raps which would seem to move to any position asked for by the spectators, and would answer questions intelligently (A 292).

Not long ago, Mr. Hamilton, in a magazine article, gave extracts from a catalogue of forty pages

which offered for sale all the secrets and paraphernalia that mediums use in perpetrating their frauds.

4:5.2 The mediums know how to be tied up in a sack and to liberate themselves so that in the darkness they can carry on their work; and yet when you turn on the light you will find them tied and sealed as before.

There are all sorts of mechanical rappers, electrical thumping machines, etc., which can be had for the purpose of producing spirit raps.

I have never been able to get these raps in an open room when even but a faint light was present.

Mediums claim that spirits have a horror of lightwaves and that certain manifestations can only occur in the dark. It is true that the *manipulating spirit has a horror of the light*, and that certain manifestations can only take place in the **darkness** (A 292-93).

VI: TABLE-TURNING AND TABLE-LIFTING (**Carrington** 64)

The principal methods employed are the following: (C 73)

If he is working alone, without confederates, he has only to press heavily on his side of the table, in order to cause an upward tilt on the side opposite to him, or, he may **place his feet under one or both of the table-legs**, and, by elevating *his* legs, and at the same time **steadying** the table with his hands, he can cause the table to be “levitated” in a very remarkable manner (C 73).

[You can *hear* wonderful stories as to how the table floated in mid-air or walked across the floor with no human being touching it. You can hear these things, yet you are never lucky enough to be present at a “table-tipping seance” where anything of the kind occurs, although you may be in attendance on those “seances” almost nightly (**Price** 169-70).]

SPIRITUALISTIC MYSTERIES EXPOSED. (**Price** 1)

In order to lift a small, round-top table the performer drives into the center of the **top** a **black pin**, allowing the head to project a quarter-inch.

It always requires perfect **darkness**.

4:5.3 There are a score of different methods for tipping tables,

the most common of which is to cause the table to lean forward slightly,

the medium **gets his toes under the near legs**, and then **balances** it there;

and in some cases like this I have known spectators to go away and say that the table rose half way to the ceiling.

Many other methods are used, such as the method of

the **black pin** inserted in the **top** of the table

On the middle finger of his right hand he has a flat band ring. This ring has a slot filed into it from the edge wide enough to admit the shank of the pin, but will not allow the head to slip through (P 228).

[See 4:7.4.]

IX: “HOLDING TESTS” (Carrington 186)

[See C 187-91.]

IV: THE PHENOMENA KNOWN AS INDEPENDENT VOICES (Funk 85)

2. OTHER “INDEPENDENT VOICE” PHENOMENA (Funk 153)

I have witnessed many phenomena of so-called independent voices. Much fraud is connected with this kind of phenomena, especially when they take place in the dark. But I have witnessed, under test conditions, phenomena of this class which have puzzled me just as it puzzled the governor I have quoted (F 157).

[See F 116, 132; M 126; C 201; 4:6.1.]

and lifted by means of

a notch in the medium’s ring.

4:5.4 The manager, or the major-domo of the seance room, often supplies the medium with her tools, spirit robes, etc.

4:5.5 There are a half dozen different successful methods of holding hands, in which the medium can be released, and yet the sitters on either side think they are securely holding the medium’s hand.

6. INDEPENDENT VOICES—TRUMPETS

4:6.1 The so-called “independent voices” which appear in connection with many spiritualistic seances are a great puzzle to many people,

but careful investigation usually discloses that they have been carried out into the room by means of extension speaking trumpets, speaking tubes, induction telephone technique, ventriloquism, etc.

SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND
BILLET TESTS. (Abbott 114)

XIV. Message on a Sitter's Slate Produced by a Rubber Stamp.—Message Produced by an Adroit Exchange of Slates.—Chemical Tricks.—Other Methods.—Means of Securing Information. (Abbott 188)

In many of the slate tricks where an assistant is used, a system of speaking tubes can be employed with wonderful results if the medium be in his own home.

The openings are concealed by picture molding, draperies, etc. They enable the assistant to hear all the information the medium gets from the subject during the reading, and he can thus prepare a more effective message.

These same tubes can be utilized by the medium for producing "independent" whispers and voices in a room where he holds a circle (A 191).

APPENDIX: CORRESPONDENCE
WITH INQUIRERS THROUGH "THE
OPEN COURT" (Abbott 266)

MEDIUMISTIC SEANCES. (Abbott 266)

[Compare A 267-68.]

Many times the confederates and assistants in adjoining rooms are informed of what is transpiring in the seance room by means of

the well-known dictograph system,

whose openings are concealed behind furniture, underneath wall paper, etc.

These systems are also used by the medium for producing whispers which are heard by the members of the circle in the darkened room.

4:6.2 I don't know of any "stunt" in which mediums indulge themselves that I have so many times detected to be pure fraud as that of the speaking trumpet.

SOURCE

I have attended but one “Trumpet Seance,” which was some eight or ten years ago in Lincoln, Nebraska....

I was satisfied that the **medium** held the trumpet to his mouth and did the talking.

I knew that **by pointing it rapidly in different directions**, the voice would appear to come from the various positions occupied by the bell of the trumpet; and the spirit would thus appear to change places rapidly over our heads (A 268).

[contd] I felt certain that the persons sitting on each side of the medium were his **confederates**, and that they held the hands of the ones next to them; but, of course, **released the medium’s hands so that he could handle the trumpet** (A 268-69).

A PUZZLING CASE. (Abbott 280)

I had an acquaintance with a medium who talked through a trumpet very often. She informed me that **it requires considerable practice** to talk well through a trumpet

and let **no sound escape near the mouth**. It is an **art** of its own, as it were (A 289).

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

Careful investigation always discloses that it is the **medium** or some confederate who is actually talking through the trumpet.

They get their hands loose from the magic circle and they use the trumpet, which is built on the extension principle and can be shortened or lengthened,

and **by the direction in which it is pointed** the voice can be made apparently to originate in almost any part of an average sized room.

In other cases **confederates** are undoubtedly employed and are properly placed in the circle for assisting in this work.

4:6.3 **I was informed a number of years ago, by an expert trumpet medium, that**

it required two or three years of practice to become proficient in the art—

that is, to be able to manage a trumpet so that

no voice would be heard at the mouth

but only at the bell of the trumpet.

SOURCE

A lady medium from Lincoln, Nebraska, recently informed me, that the dark seance is rapidly losing prestige since the manufacture of the **pocket electric light**. She said that these were being used on the trumpet mediums all over the country with **disastrous** results, and that the profession would soon have to drift into other channels of trickery (A 293).

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

4:6.4 Trumpet speaking is rapidly going out of fashion because too many times the **pocket electric flashlight** has been turned on them so **disastrously**,

and thus scores of these performers have come to their untimely end, for when the light is suddenly switched on or a flash is thrown on the scene, it is always found that the medium is at the end of the so-called "spirit-speaking trumpet."

7. SEANCE LIGHTS

4:7.1 Many methods of producing light have been discovered to be employed by so-called mediums.

SPIRITUALISTIC MYSTERIES EXPOSED. (Price 1)

After labelling the bottle "**Cough Medicine**," [the medium] put it in his pocket and sought a dark closet to see how his "cough medicine" would work (P 83).

But he did not yet know of the possibilities of his "cough medicine," and in the course of a few months had discovered a way in which to **produce a great deal of interesting phenomena** with its aid that was new to most Spiritualists (P 84).

Sometimes these crafty creatures carry around

a bottle of "**cough medicine**"

which enables them to

produce many striking phenomena,

[See P 90-91.]

V: A CHAPTER OF GHOSTLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (McCabe 77)

Luminous phenomena “are easily simulated,” says Dr. Maxwell.

Most people will agree to this candid verdict of so experienced and so sympathetic an investigator.

Tons of phosphorus have been used in the service of religion since 1848. It has taken the place of incense.

The saintly Moses twice had a nasty mess with his bottle of phosphorus.

Herne was one night tracing a pious message in luminous characters (with a damp match) when there was a crackle and flash; the match had “struck.”

The movement abounds in incidents which are, in a double sense, “luminous” (M 91).

[contd] Certain sulphides may be used instead of phosphorus, and in modern times electricity is an excellent means of producing lights at a distance.

Chemicals of the pyrotechnic sort are also useful.

One must remember that behind the thousands of mediums, whose fertile brains are constantly elaborating new methods of evading control,

after the lights are turned out,

in the shape of floating lights and other luminous manifestations.

4:7.2 Luminous phenomena “are easily simulated,” says Doctor Maxwell.

Most people will agree to this candid verdict of so experienced and so sympathetic an investigator.

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The spiritualistic movement abounds in incidents which are in a double sense “luminous.”

4:7.3 Certain sulphides may be used instead of phosphorus, and in modern times electricity is an excellent means of producing lights at a distance.

Chemicals of the pyrotechnic sort are also useful.

One must remember that behind the thousands of mediums, whose fertile brains are constantly elaborating new methods of evading control,

are manufacturers and scientific experts who supply them with chemicals and apparatus.

One often hears Spiritualists laugh at this suggestion as a wild theory of their opponents (M 91).

But positive proof has been given over and over again (M 91).

HALF HOURS WITH THE MEDIUMS.
(Abbott 1)

X. Materialization.—Preparation of Luminous Costumes, Method of Presentation, etc. (Abbott 70)

[One medium] uses many elegant costumes, all made of the finest silk; and they can all be contained in a very small space. He has one piece consisting of twenty-one yards of the finest white French bridal veiling,

which can be contained in a pint cup (A 71).

are manufacturers and scientific experts who supply them with chemicals and apparatus.

One often hears Spiritualists laugh at this suggestion as a wild theory of their opponents.

But positive proof that such is the case has been given over and over again.

Mediums have told me how they use

French bridal veiling

and Belgian netting treated with phosphorus and other compounds to manufacture all sorts of beautiful spirit robes.

I once saw taken in a raid in a seance in Chicago some thirty yards of this material which could be almost secreted in the palm of the hand, and could easily be contained in an ordinary pocket.

In fact I was able to put it all, very conveniently in a pint cup.

The solution for dyeing is made as follows: One jar of "Balmain's Luminous Paint," one-half pint Demar varnish, one pint odorless benzine, fifty drops of lavender oil. All must be mixed together, kept thin, and the work done very rapidly.

This fabric will, after being exposed to the light, shine for a long time in the dark and appear as a soft, luminous vapor (A 71).

MATERIALIZATION. (Abbott 235)

Where the medium works alone he generally uses the luminous costumes previously described;

but when he has confederates who impersonate the spirits, this is unnecessary, as is also such complete darkness.

Let us suppose that the medium works from a cabinet.

He first allows strangers to erect and at the same time to thoroughly examine it.

Next he is taken into the cabinet and thoroughly disrobed by a committee,

and his clothing is examined.

There are many different ways of preparing this material so as to make it properly luminous and "spooky" in appearance during the darkened hours of the seance.

One experienced medium furnished us with a recipe for treating this fabric in order successfully to convert it into "spirit robes."

4:7.4 Most mediums who attempt materializations have been found, upon investigation, to employ either confederates or some form of luminous costume.

When the medium works alone, he generally uses the luminous costumes;

but when he has confederates who impersonate the spirits, this is unnecessary.

If the medium works from a cabinet,

he first allows strangers to erect and at the same time thoroughly to examine it,

after which he enters the cabinet and is thoroughly disrobed by a committee,

while at the same time his clothing is examined.

SOURCE

Then the committee retires (A 235).

[contd] The medium has a gentleman assistant who stays with the spectators during the seance.

This gentleman now steps in front of the cabinet and makes a short talk to the spectators in regard to the conditions to be maintained during the seance.

While he is talking, he is standing directly in front of the closed cabinet curtains, and close to them.

Under the tail of his coat, behind, is a small load of luminous silk forms, faces, hands, costumes, and two pencil reaching-rods.

The medium slips his hands secretly through the curtains and removes this load, taking it into the cabinet (A 235).

[contd] The assistant now has the lights put out, and seats himself in the front row with the ardent believers

who help to see that conditions are not disturbed (A 235).

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

The committee, having satisfied itself that the medium is in possession of no robes, retires.

The medium usually has an assistant who stays with the spectators during the seance,

and who occupies the time at this juncture by

making an appropriate speech regarding the favorable conditions which should be maintained during the seance.

During the brief address, the assistant usually stands directly in front of the closed cabinet curtains.

Under the tail of his coat, behind, is an abundant supply of luminous silk forms, faces, hands, costumes, and two or three pencil-reaching rods.

The medium slyly slips his hands through the curtains and helps himself to this liberal supply of spirit habiliments.

The assistant now has the lights extinguished and takes his position in the front row with the sincere believers,

where he can best see to it that proper conditions prevail—

conditions in every way favorable to the successful conduct of the materialization seance.

9. ECTOPLASM AND EVA C.

4:8.1 One European medium had to submit to a surgical operation at the hands of a skilled surgeon, because she had swallowed her masks when detection threatened. This woman is a ruminant. She swallows her paraphernalia and brings it up at will. She swallows the ectoplasm, too.

I had some ectoplasm in my hands not two weeks ago. It is manufactured by the same man who makes the apparatus for magicians.

[See 4:2.5, above.]

II: HOW GHOSTS ARE MADE (McCabe 17)

4:8.2 In my study of the case of Eva C., I have reached the same conclusion as that arrived at by certain observers who have made a critical study of the phenomena connected with this medium's performances, and that is:

There is strong reason to believe that usually she [Marthe Beraud, a.k.a. "Eva C."] swallowed her material

I believe that she swallows much of her material,

and brought it up at will from her gullet or stomach.

and that she possesses the power to bring it up from her stomach or from a dilated oesophagus at will.

More than a hundred cases of this power are known,

Medical science has in its records between fifty and one hundred cases of just such remarkable individuals who are technically known as "ruminants."

and there is much positive evidence that Marthe was a "ruminant."

There is much evidence on record which goes to prove that Eva C. is a ruminant.

She sometimes bled copiously from the mouth and gullet, and she used the mouth much to manipulate the gauzy stuff.

She has been known to bleed freely from the mouth and gullet.

When I mentioned this well-known theory of Marthe Beraud Sir Arthur laughed. He said that he doubted if I had read the book I professed to have read, because Marthe had a net sewn round her head, which “disproved” my theory. He summoned me to retract. He said I had “slipped up pretty badly” (M 40).

[contd] Well, the theory was not mine, but that of a doctor who had studied Marthe, and who has little difficulty in dealing with the net. Had it not been the end of the debate, however, our audience would have heard a surprising reply. They would have learned that the net was used only in seven sittings out of hundreds, and that the medium then compelled them to abandon it.

They would have learned that the net, instead of “not making the slightest difference to the experiments,” as Sir. A. C. Doyle says, made four out of these seven sittings completely barren of results! And they would have further learned that when the net was on, and Marthe could not use her mouth, she stipulated that the back of her clothing should be left open (M 40-41).

Of course Doyle has objected to this explanation on the ground that she sometimes performs with a net sewn about her neck.

The fact is that she seldom performs with this net sewn about her neck,

out of hundreds of seances there being a record of its being used as a test only seven times, and that she refused to permit its further employment

because in four out of these seven sittings she was unable to elude her observers and the seances were barren of results.

10. THE TRICK OF READING SEALED WRITING

4:9.1 The mediums are very clever and employ many methods of getting your name.

[One gray winter afternoon as the north wind was howling down the streets and swirling clouds of snow against my windows, I thought of some place to spend the evening that would break the loneliness. I noticed in a daily paper an advertisement of one of the high-priests of this strange religion, and I determined with a friend to visit the realm of the supernatural that evening (A 4-5).]

[*Note:* This event mirrors McCabe's account of Truesdell's outsmarting Slade: "It was on this occasion that [Truesdell] left a misleading letter in his overcoat in Slade's hall, and found the spirits assuming that he was 'Samuel Johnson, Rome, N.Y.'" (M 112). Sadler retells the Truesdell story in 3:6.17.]

HALF HOURS WITH THE MEDIUMS.

(Abbott 1)

VI. Tests Given in a Large Store Room with Curtains for Partitions, Using Telegraphy, etc. (Abbott 35)

[contd] An intelligent and influential gentleman once told me of a most wonderful experience that he had in his home town. A lady medium came to the town and began giving the most wonderful tests....

This gentleman accordingly called on her, and he was certain that she could not have known him in any way.

As soon as the sitting began, this lady told the gentleman his name, the number of persons in his family that were living, also the number that were dead (A 35).

I remember well, on a cold wintry evening a few years back, attending a seance

and carrying a friend's calling card in my overcoat pocket. I was careful to leave my own cards and all letters that might identify me at home, and I noticed that the medium, during the evening, identified me and addressed me by the name of my friend's card which I had left in my overcoat pocket in the hallway.

4:9.2 On another occasion, when I had most carefully excluded from my person anything that could identify me,

the medium promptly recognized me and called me by name during the seance, saying: "You are Doctor Sadler,

SOURCE

She then summoned the spirits of his dead and delivered their messages to him (A 35).

[Compare A 35-38.]

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

and there is a spirit messenger here from the other world who has something to say to you.”

This case greatly puzzled me and I was some time in solving the problem—in fact I did not solve it, but on a return visit the maid in waiting on this medium let the “cat out of the bag” by asking me for some further instructions in connection with advice she had received at my hands in a clinic where she had come for help; and then when she was confronted with the charge admitted having given her employer my name.

This but illustrates that if we can really get at the bottom of these cases we always find a purely human, perfectly natural explanation of the whole affair. It mystifies us only as the magician entertains and deceives us, because we do not know at first how they do it.

4:9.3 *Getting Your Name.*

SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS. (Abbott 114)

XII. Methods of Obtaining a Secret Impression of the Writing of a Sitter.—A Store-Room Reading where this is Used.—A Test Using a Prepared Book.—How to “Switch” a Question.—Tricks Depending on this Principle.—Tests Given by Various Chicago Mediums.—Reading a Message by Pressing it on a Skull Cap Worn by Mediums. (Abbott 164)

[contd] I will here describe a few methods of obtaining a name or a question which is written by a sitter, and where the sitter usually retains the writing in his own possession.

Of the many methods utilized for getting your name,

The first that I will describe is the most improved method known at present, and is almost universally used by the professional mediums traveling over the country (A 164).

[contd] The idea is to get an impression of the writing

that is not a carbon impression.

The impression is, in fact, invisible until after it is “developed.”

The paper used is a thin, highly glazed paper.

A tablet of this paper is provided for the subject to write upon.

He can make an inspection of the tablet if he so desire, and he will find nothing.

The operator first prepares a few sheets of the paper by rubbing over one side of them with wax.

Some mediums use paraffin wax, which has been melted and mixed with a small amount of vaseline... I prefer to use “spermaceti” wax.

The wax being white, can not be seen on the paper after the same has been coated with it (A 164).

[contd] The sheet must be laid on a flat, smooth surface and thoroughly rubbed over with the wax. This prepared sheet is generally placed in the tablet two or three sheets below the top, coated side down.

some feature of the following procedure is quite universally employed by travelling mediums.

The idea is to get an impression of your writing,

including, of course, your name,

that is not a carbon impression.

The impression is, in fact, invisible until after it is “developed.”

The paper used is a thin, highly glazed paper.

A tablet of this paper is provided for the subject to write upon.

He can make an inspection of the tablet if he so desire, and he will find nothing out of the ordinary.

4:9.4 The operator first prepares a few sheets of the paper by rubbing over one side of them with spermaceti wax

which has been melted and mixed with a small amount of vaseline.

The wax, being white, cannot be seen on the paper after the same has been coated with it.

This prepared sheet is generally placed in the tablet two or three sheets below the top, coated side down,

It should be held in place with library paste; and another prepared sheet should be similarly placed a little further down, to be used in case emergency demands it (A 164).

[contd] When the writing is done, an invisible impression of it is transferred from the waxed surface of the prepared sheet, to the sheet next under it.

Of course this can not be seen until developed, as the wax is very thin and is the color of the paper.

After the subject writes his questions, and removes the sheet bearing them, the operator secures this tablet by almost any secret means;

and then he secretly removes the sheet bearing the impression and develops it.

This is most generally done by throwing on the sheet some powdered charcoal, and shaking the sheet around until the powder adheres to the wax, after which the surplus powder is dusted off.

The writing appears plainly and may be easily read.

Some performers use plumbago, lampblack, or coal dust instead of charcoal (A 164-65).

There are so many methods of gaining knowledge of what a sitter secretly writes that it is impossible to give them all here.

It is safe to say that in any case where the subject is required to write anything,

being held in place with library paste.

4:9.5 When the writing is done, an invisible impression is transferred from the waxed surface of the prepared sheet, to the sheet next under it.

Of course this cannot be seen until developed, as the wax is very thin and is the color of the paper.

After the subject writes his questions, and removes the sheet bearing them, the operator secures this tablet by almost any one of a number of secret means;

and then he secretly removes the sheet bearing the impression and develops it

by throwing on the sheet some powdered charcoal, and shaking the sheet around until the powder adheres to the wax, after which the surplus powder is dusted off.

The writing appears plainly and may be easily read.

Some performers use plumbago, lampblack, or coal dust, instead of charcoal.

4:9.6 There are so many ways of gaining information as to what you write

that it is safe to say that if the sitter in any seance or the inquirer of any medium ever indulges in any writing on the medium's premises,

SOURCE

that there is always a secret means of gaining knowledge of the writing (A 177).

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

the medium will be able to gain an accurate knowledge of what was written.

I have been able to ferret out more than a dozen different methods whereby a medium can gain a knowledge of what the sitter writes, and I have never written anything for a medium on their own paper and with the pencils they furnish, and on the premises, but what they were able to read the writing; but in no cases, extending over a period of twenty years, have mediums ever been able to read what I have written at home, which writing I have taken to the seance room and kept in my hands or in my own pocket.

4:9.7 *The Alcohol Method.*

XV: SEALED-LETTER READING (Carrington 276)

I now give a method that has probably been employed more frequently than any other in the whole range of tests that deal with sealed-letter reading (C 283).

Since the card is sealed in the envelope in this case, so that it would be impossible to abstract it without detection, the medium makes use of a simple device that renders the envelope temporarily *transparent*. In order to accomplish this without detection, the medium makes use of a small sponge *wet with alcohol*, which is palmed in his right hand (C 283-84).

Of course the medium has to make sure that his sitter places the card in the envelope with the *written side toward the front or face of the envelope*, and not toward the sealed side or back (C 284).

Perhaps the most universal method of reading sealed writing, which has been employed by mediums in the past,

has been through the use of absolute or relatively absolute alcohol.

These mediums take care that the writing is placed in the envelopes so that the *written surface is against the face of the envelope*.

As soon as [the medium] receives the envelope in his hand, he wets the surface with the concealed sponge, on the way to his table.

This renders the face of the envelope quite transparent for the time being, and the medium is enabled to read what is written on the enclosed card.

Nothing will do to wet the paper but alcohol. Nothing else will dry out quickly enough and leave the paper uncrinkled (C 284).

HALF HOURS WITH MEDIUMS.
(Abbott 1)

III. Test Where a Trick Envelope with a Double Front is used. (Abbott 14)

I will now explain the method used by the medium in this performance.

It is only necessary then, with a sponge or a handkerchief which may be concealed in the hair, the sleeve, or somewhere about the table,

to moisten the front of the envelope with the alcohol

which renders it transparent and the writing is entirely clear to the medium.

In a few seconds the alcohol evaporates leaving the paper smooth and dry,

with no wrinkling of the surface,

and there is no way of detecting that it has been applied.

11. TRICK ENVELOPES

4:10.1 I have collected from mediums and conjurers more than a score of different methods of preparing trick envelopes for the deception of the spiritualistic inquirer.

One method,

which has come to be used in the past dozen years by many mediums,

SOURCE

He uses a box of envelopes of the ordinary business size or a trifle smaller.

He takes one envelope and with a pair of scissors cuts a small margin off the ends and bottom of it.

He now discards the back side of the envelope, and uses only the front side with its flap which is attached to it.

This half of the envelope

will now slip inside of another envelope, and the two flaps will fit each other very accurately.

By moistening the flap of the complete envelope it can be sealed to the flap of the "dummy."

This the medium does so neatly that none but the sharpest eye could detect that the envelope has a double front and that the flap really consists of two flaps stuck together neatly.

Before fastening the two flaps together the message is prepared and placed in the compartment between the two fronts (A 17-18).

[contd] After all is prepared,

the envelope looks like an ordinary one;

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is to have a box of ordinary-appearing envelopes

sitting on the table in the ante-room where the inquirers write their questions.

Now, the medium takes one of these envelopes and with a pair of sharp scissors cuts a very small bit off one end and the bottom.

The back side of the envelope is then discarded and only the front side with its flap is used.

This half of the envelope,

it will be found,

will now very readily slip inside of another envelope and the two flaps will fit into each other very accurately.

If the flap of the whole envelope is slightly moistened, it can be readily sealed to the flap of the dummy

so as to avoid detection under the sharpest scrutiny.

Now before the medium seals these two flaps together the spirit message is prepared and placed in the compartment between the two fronts,

and after this trick envelope is thus prepared

it is placed in the box containing the other innocent and honest envelopes

which it resembles in every way.

SOURCE

and if it be taken from a box of envelopes,

there is nothing to give an idea of preparation.

The medium always sits in such manner that the subject is between him and the light, as otherwise the subject might see the paper in the concealed compartment of this prepared envelope (A 18).

When the lady places the letter in the envelope the medium is holding it open.

He immediately seals it himself

and taking it in the tips of the fingers of his right hand requests the sitter to hold the other end of the envelope.

When the medium is ready to produce the message, he tears the end of the envelope off himself;

and holding the envelope in his left hand, he reaches in the front compartment with the fingers of his right hand,

bringing out the message which he hands directly to the sitter, with the request that it be examined for a communication.

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When it is removed from this box in the presence of the sitter,

there is certainly nothing to suggest any previous preparation,

even though it be carefully examined: that is, provided

the medium sits—as he always does—in such a position that the sitter is between him and the light.

4:10.2 The message is then dropped into the envelope by the medium, while perhaps the subject holds it open,

it is sealed in the presence and full view of the sitter,

after which the envelope is taken in the tips of the fingers of the medium's right hand and he requests the subject to hold the other end.

4:10.3 Now when the stage is all set, and after a suitable interlude of talking, and after a signal has been received that the spirit has written the message,

the medium proceeds to tear off the end of the envelope himself,

and while deftly holding the envelope in his left hand, he reaches into the front compartment with the fingers of his right hand,

bringing out the message which he immediately hands to the enquirer, asking that it be examined and read.

SOURCE

The moment the sitter sees the words, the excitement of reading is so great

that it is exceedingly easy for the medium, with the left hand which contains the envelope

to slip into his left pocket the envelope just used and take therefrom the duplicate.

His left side is away from the sitter; and he has ample time to make the exchange and bring out a genuine envelope with the end torn off,

which, now as the sitter finishes reading the message, he takes in his right hand and presents to the subject (A 18-19).

SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING AND BILLET TESTS. (Abbott 114)

I. Introduction. (Abbott 114)

The reader must understand that the most essential part of any trick is the psychological part.... The subject sees only what the operator desires him to see, even though much of that which is hidden is performed before his very eyes (A 114-15).

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Now, as a rule the subject is considerably excited at this time—

unless he is a cool-headed investigator—and during this little flurry

it is an easy matter for the medium

to slip the envelope just used into his pocket and bring forth therefrom a duplicate

which has been prepared beforehand—

a genuine envelope with the end torn off in exactly the same fashion as that which has just been used for the trick.

And after the inquirer has read his “spirit” message, this envelope can be handed over to him for a full and complete examination.

12. SLATE WRITING

4:11.1 There are, literally, scores of methods for practicing deception in slate writing.

The basic trick is to exchange the slates right before your eyes without your detecting it.

XIV. Message on a Sitter's Slate Produced by a Rubber Stamp.—Message Produced by an Adroit Exchange of Slates.—Chemical Tricks.—Other Methods.—Means of Securing Information. (Abbott 188)

There are also chemical tricks, although they are not so much used.

If a message be prepared with nitrate of silver, and then breathed upon, it will vanish.

If the slate be washed with salt water, the message appears but can not be erased.

There are also dozens of chemicals for writing invisible messages on paper, which will appear from heat, or from the application of a blotter saturated with other chemicals.

If a message be written on paper with a solution of sulphate of iron, it is invisible.

If the paper be placed in an envelope moistened inside with a solution of nut-galls, the writing appears.

The paper can be placed between slates just washed with the same solution, and the writing will soon be visible (A 190-91).

There are also slate writers who write with a small piece of pencil held on the end of a single finger by a little piece of flesh colored court plaster with a hole in its center.

The methods are too numerous to describe in our limited space.

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4:11.4 There are also slate writers who write with a small piece of pencil held on the end of a single finger by a flesh-colored piece of courtplaster with a hole in its center.

In such cases the message is written while the hand pinches the slate up under the table.

There is a thimble used, sometimes, with holders attached containing colored crayons; but it requires an expert to use it (A 191).

VIII. Slate Trick Requiring Three Slates and a Flap.—The Same Used as a Conjuring Trick.—Preparation of the Slates. (Abbott 142)

Also there is a secret about one of the slates. It is the style known as a “flap slate.”

Such a slate is an ordinary one, except that there is a loose piece of slate called a “flap” which fits neatly into the frame of the slate.

When the flap is in position the slate appears to the sight as an ordinary slate, and any message written on the surface of the slate proper under this flap, can not be seen.

The flap fits loosely enough so that if the slate be turned over it will fall out

and expose the concealed message.

There are many trick slates, but the “flap slate” is the best and the one most generally used (A 144).

In such cases the message is written, while the hand pinches the slate up under the table.

There is a thimble used, sometimes, with holders attached containing colored crayons; but it requires an expert to it.

4:11.5 *Trick Slates.*

The “flap slate” has also been successfully used by fraudulent mediums.

This looks very much like an ordinary innocent slate, except that it has a flap which fits neatly into the frame of the slate.

Elaborate spirit messages can be written upon the slate under this flap, the slate can be critically examined and the writing of course is fully concealed.

Now this flap fits sufficiently loose so that the medium can, in its manipulation, turn the slate over, remove the flap,

and then when the slate is exposed the concealed message is in full view.

Various modifications of this trick have been employed from time to time by the most successful mediums and it has been very difficult to detect the fraud.

13. THE OUIJA BOARD

4:12.1 In the vast majority of instances the phenomena of the ouija board represent more or less conscious and definite fraud. That is, the individual either consciously cheats, or is being hoodwinked by his own subconscious mind.

4:12.2 Perhaps the most monumental demonstration of the sophistries of the ouija board was made by

THE ROAD TO EN-DOR: Being an Account of How Two Prisoners of War at Yozgad in Turkey Won Their Way to Freedom, by E. H. Jones, Lt. I.A.R.O. with illustrations by C. W. Hill, Lt. R.A.F. (Jones title page)

two British lieutenants who were Turkish military prisoners at Yozgad during the late World War.

[Note: Sadler here gives an inaccurate summary of the first eight of the book's 30 chapters.]

4:12.3 These two young men, having heard of the recent outbreaks of Sir Oliver Lodge, and after reading the spiritistic ebullitions of Sir A. Conan Doyle, decided on the production of a little spirit phenomena on their own hook. These young men assembled about them some of their fellow prisoners of war, constructed a ouija board upon which they moved a glass, touched lightly by the fingers of two of them, and as a means at first of harmless diversion and entertainment, one of these young men began to fake "spirit" messages. He enjoyed the sensation of outwitting his fellow prisoners, and witnessing their looks of amazement and hearing their expressions of astonishment.

4:12.4 With the passing of days the fame of these young men grew. By fishing for information here and there and by means of clever guesswork and fortunate stabs in the dark they created for themselves an enviable reputation as “mystics,” “psychics,” and “sensitives.” They became the talk of the whole camp. It seems to have been the intention of the deceiver to have made an early confession of his culpability and ask forgiveness, and to have explained that it was all a joke, but he got in farther and farther, and finally confessed to his associate that his part was all a fraud and the associate made the same confession. Then they decided to go on together and have a little more fun, as times were dull in this Turkish military camp.

4:12.5 The spare time of the camp for some time, turned its attention to “spooking,” and soon the Turkish guards became interested and considerable disturbance was created at one time because of the belief on the part of the Turks that these mediums were sending out and receiving contraband military messages. Through the means of this apparently harmless prank, a tremendous belief in the occult and the supernatural was built up on the part of the British prisoners of war in this camp. The story is as remarkable as that chronicled by any medium of highest repute. No professional performer of spiritistic phenomena, or amateur dabbler in the occult, ever had a more remarkable experience than these two young men had in bamboozling their fellow prisoners.

4:12.6 These two mediums, if we may now call them such, were subjected to many and stringent tests by their fellows in the camp, and they always managed to come out by some clever ruse or manipulation, and to make good. Again and again they picked up bits of information dropped, which they cleverly weaved into elaborate stories and gave most impressive seances and imparted most astonishing information to the observers at these amateur “spook” circles.

14. SPIRIT MOULDS

SPIRITUALISTIC MYSTERIES EXPOSED. (Price 1)

4:13.1 When in London, some years back, I was considerably interested by a group of mediums who were then indulging in the art of producing

Perhaps the reader witnessed or read of the wonderful spirit paraffine moulds that created so much astonishment some years ago in London. [*Note:* The author was writing in 1891.]

moulds

of hands, arms, and other parts of spirit materializations corresponding to some portion of the human form Divine—

[See Exhibit A, in Appendix.]

such as Doyle recently exploited.

These mediums were then teaching that

It was supposed that the spirits “materialized” and in the presence of the “sitters”

the spirits were able to materialize in our presence

and that they were able thus to

made paraffine moulds of their faces, feet and hands (P 311).

produce paraffine moulds of their hands, faces, feet, etc.

SOURCE

[contd] They would prepare for this “phase”

by placing in a basin of hot water a large piece of paraffine wax.

This would melt and float on the surface of the water. This would be placed on a table in front of the “cabinet” with a basin of cold water.

The spirits would come from the “cabinet”

and bending over, apparently dip their faces in first the paraffine

and then the cold water.

It would require three dips to have the sheet of paraffine sufficiently thick to retain its form.

After dipping, the spirit would stand erect

and apparently pull the mould from the face

and hand it to one of the “sitters.”

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Their preliminary preparation for seances of this sort,

in addition to producing an expectation on the part of the sitters, was to

immerse a large piece of paraffine wax in a basin of hot water,

placing this melting, floating mass on a table in front of the cabinet with a basin of cold water handy by.

The spirits always came out from the cabinet,

whereupon they would apparently dip their hands or faces first into the melted paraffine in the basin of hot water

and then into the basin of cold water,

and this would be repeated as

it seemed to require three or four dips in order to accumulate an amount of paraffine sufficiently thick to retain form.

After this the spirit would stand up full length before the audience,

and with considerable ceremony take the mould from the face or hand, as the case might be,

and pass it out to the sitters for examination.

SOURCE

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4:13.2 In those seances which I attended, this procedure was carried out under very strict guardianship

This was all performed in a *very dim* light (P 311-12).

and in the faintest possible light.

But like all other hoaxes of this sort it was destined to be short-lived, as it was soon discovered that

[contd] The explanation is simple enough and lies in the “medium’s” having prepared in advance by making paraffine masks from plaster of paris moulds.

the mediums prepared in advance for these seances by making paraffine masks from plaster moulds,

When the spirit came from the “cabinet” it had fitted over its face the prepared mould,

so that when these alleged spirits came forth from the cabinet they had fitted over their faces or hands this previously prepared mould,

and, in reality,

so that in reality,

as subsequent investigation disclosed,

did not dip into the paraffine but *did* dip into the water,

they did not dip their faces or hands into the hot paraffine, but they did dip them into the cold water

so that when the “sitter” got them they were wet and dripping (P 312).

so that when the spectators were given the moulds to inspect they were always wet and dripping.

15. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS AND PAINTINGS

4:14.1 It has been my good fortune to know one or two individuals who have become experts in spirit photography—one who was formerly a professional medium, and another who dabbled in this thing as a sort of hobby. From these friends I had my first insight into some of the numerous methods employed by spirit photographers in their technique of deluding the public in general, and the faithful believers in particular.

XI: SPIRIT-PHOTOGRAPHY (Carrington 206)

[Compare C 211-13 and see photos facing C 212 and C 214.]

Among the many methods employed, the following may be mentioned: After a plate is developed which contains the portrait, let us say, of some spiritualistic believer, this negative if it has placed under it a sheet of sensitized paper, will, after it is exposed to the rays of the sun, exhibit in shadowy outline a print of the original portrait.

Now this same process can be carried out with still another negative, allowing a shorter period for the exposure, and this technique will permit additional figures and faces to appear in mystic and shadowy outline about the original photograph.

IV: SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHS AND SPIRIT PICTURES (McCabe 63)

One medium offers you an apparently blank sheet of paper,

4:14.2 One spirit photographer of renown will give you an apparently innocent looking blank sheet of paper,

and while engaged in talking his mediumistic babble,

and, although nothing more suspicious than laying it under an innocent-looking blotting-pad can be seen,

and there is certainly no substitution,

a photograph appears on it while you wait (M 73).

The photograph was there, invisible, all the time.

It had been taken on a special paper (solio paper), and bleached out with bi-chloride of mercury.

The blotting-pad was wet with a solution of hypo,

and this suffices to restore the photograph (M 73).

Another medium shows you a blank canvas,

and, almost without taking it out of your sight, produces an elegant, and still wet, oil painting on it.

The painting was there from the start, of course, but a blank canvas was lightly gummed over it,

will lay this blank piece of paper under an ordinary appearing blotting pad resting on top of the table.

The most careful scrutiny may be maintained over this process to see that

no substitution of the paper is made,

and yet a photograph appears upon that sheet of paper within a few minutes' time.

Now, an invisible photograph was there on the apparently blank piece of paper all the while.

A picture had been taken on this special material, known as solio paper, the image of which had been bleached out with bichloride of mercury.

The harmless looking blotting pad resting on the table was moistened with a solution of "hypo,"

and in this way, in a few short moments the photograph was quite fully restored.

4:14.3 *Tricks of the Trade.*

Another medium can show you an ordinary blank canvas,

and without really taking this thing out of your sight will be able to produce a beautiful oil painting

which inspection shows has been so recently done that the paint is still wet.

Now in this case the painting was there all the time, but a blank canvas was neatly held in place over it by means of a little gum,

and all the conjuring the medium had to do was to strip off this blank canvas while your attention was diverted.

Mediums know that their sitters are profoundly impressed

if the paint is “still wet.”

I have heard Spiritualists stubbornly maintain that this proves that the painting had only just been done, and done by spirit-power, since no man could do it in so short a time.

It is a good illustration of the ease with which they are duped. The picture may have been painted a week or a month before. Rub it with a little poppy oil and you have “wet paint” (M 74).

[During the debate at the Queen’s Hall Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had on the table before him a work which contained a hundred and fifty photographs of materializations (M 18).]

He tells us how he bought the plate, examined the camera, and exposed and developed the plate with his own hands.

so that all this medium had to do was to divert your attention for a moment and cleverly rip off the plain or camouflage canvas.

Spiritualists are always much impressed—

at least they used to be—

by the fact that the painting was wet at the time it was so mysteriously produced.

Many have argued that this constitutes sufficient and abundant proof of genuineness.

So it is very easy for the spiritualistic conjurors to accommodate them in this superstition,

as by rubbing a little “poppy oil” on these paintings they appear to be fresh, or as commonly described “wet.”

4:14.4 Doyle’s Spirit Photographs.

Among the many spirit photographs collected by Doyle and offered by him as proof in support of the contention that spirit entities can so materialize themselves as to be subject to photography,

there is one case that demands more than passing attention.

He tells about having purchased a plate, examined the camera, and how he exposed and developed the plate with his own hands.

“No hands but mine ever touched the plate,” he says impressively (M 65).

What is important is that Sir Arthur adds: “On examining with a powerful lens the face of the ‘extra’ I have found such a marking as is produced in newspaper process work.”

Very few of the general public would understand the significance of this, but I advise the reader to

take an illustrated book or journal and examine a photograph in it with a lens (which need not be powerful). He will see at once that the figure consists of a multitude of dots, and wherever you find an illustration showing these dots it has been at some time printed in a book or paper.

During a lantern lecture, for instance, you can tell, by the presence or absence of these dots, whether a slide has been

reproduced from an illustration

“No hands but mine ever touched the plate,” he says.

That he must have been the subject of some cute prank, notwithstanding his impressive declaration that he so carefully supervised the photographic technique in this case, is shown by his own admission, when he feels called upon further to explain, that

“on examining with a powerful lens the face of the ‘extra’ I have found such a marking as is produced in newspaper process work.”

Now it should be explained to the reader that

the half-tones which have been prepared for reproduction in newspapers, magazines, or books, show, when they are printed,

certain little lines of dots when such a printed picture is examined under a magnifying glass.

The same thing is characteristic of lantern slides;

these dots will appear on the screen if the picture has been made from a printed half-tone

reproduction of a photograph,

or made direct from the photographic negative (M 65).

[contd] Sir A. C. Doyle is candid, but his Spiritualist zeal outruns his reason.

He goes on to say:—"It is *very possible* that the picture . . . was conveyed on to the plate from some existing picture.

However that may be, it was most certainly supernormal, and not due to any manipulation or fraud."

This is an amazing conclusion (M 65).

There were several ways of doing this.

The first was to cut out the figure of the ghost in celluloid or some other almost transparent material and attach it to the lens.

whereas the picture will be smooth and minus these dots if the lantern slide has been

made directly from the photographic plate.

4:14.5 Now Doyle admits that this picture, the taking of which he so stringently supervised, shows these dots which indicate that it was made from a magazine or newspaper reproduction of the original photograph.

Doyle admits all this,

and goes so far as to grant that perhaps his picture was in some way made from a previous reprint of a photograph,

but he further maintains:

"However that may be it was most certainly supernormal, and not due to any manipulation or fraud."

What an astounding conclusion for an intelligent man to reach!

4:14.6 *Celluloid Ghosts.*

There seems to be no end to the technical methods whereby a trick photographer can produce the simulated spirit photographs.

One method which has been successfully employed is to

cut out the figure of a ghost in celluloid or some other transparent material and carefully attach it to the lens of the camera.

SOURCE

When this trick leaked out,

a very tiny figure of the ghost, hidden in the camera, was projected through a magnifying glass

(a kind of small magic-lantern)

on to the plate when it was exposed in the camera (M 68-69).

I remember an honest and critical Spiritualist telling me, about ten years ago, that

he offered a certain spirit-photographer (who is still at work) five pounds for a spirit-photograph,

if the sitter were permitted to see every step of the process.

The photographer agreed;

but when my friend wanted to examine the camera

he at first bluffed, and then returned the money,

saying that that was carrying scepticism too far!

He had the ghost in his camera (M 68-69).

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After the exposure of this technique

others produced a tiny ghost which could be hidden in the camera and projected through a magnifying glass,

after the technique of the common magic lantern,

so that it would thus appear on the plate when the same was exposed in the camera.

4:14.7 Some years ago

I offered one hundred dollars to a local spirit photographer for a spirit photograph

in which I would be permitted to examine every step of the process.

My proposition was accepted

but when I desired to make an elaborate examination of the camera

before the first step was taken,

my friend the photographer backed out.

He said my materialistic skepticism was of such a rank order that he feared it would entirely inhibit the activities of the spirits.

Undoubtedly this chap had a miniature ghost in his camera.

SOURCE

There are still several ways of making the ghost. Where the sitter is careless, or an enthusiastic Spiritualist, the old tricks (substitution of plates, etc.) are used;

but there are new tricks to meet the critical.

The ghost may be painted in sulphate of quinine or other chemicals on the ground-glass screen.

Such a figure is invisible when it is dry (M 69-70).

APPENDIX: CORRESPONDENCE WITH INQUIRERS THROUGH "THE OPEN COURT." (Abbott 294)

SPIRIT PORTRAITURE. (Abbott 294)

Mediums now began experimenting with chemicals, to discover those that could be put on a canvas and that would remain invisible until developed (A 298).

4: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

4:14.8 Among the older tricks of this sort of trade was

the substitution of plates,

and among the newer methods are those in which

the ghost is painted with sulphate of quinine or other chemicals on the ground glass screen.

Such a figure would be entirely invisible when dry,

and would pass the closest inspection, as indeed it has at my hands.

With such a preparation, all that is required is to in some way supply a little moisture and then upon the operation of the camera the ghost figure will appear.

4:14.9 *Chemistry of Spook Painting.*

Recently the "spook" painters have worked out a new technique for producing invisible portraits.

SOURCE

If a canvas of unbleached muslin have a portrait painted on it with the solutions given below, it will appear to be unprepared, as the chemicals will be invisible when dry. If sprayed with a weak solution of tincture of iron, the picture gradually appears. Sulphocyanide of potassium is used for red, ferrocyanide of potassium for blue, and tannin for black (A 299).

Then through a tiny hole in the cabinet curtain, the medium, from behind, using an atomizer, secretly sprayed the canvas with the developing solution.

The portrait gradually made its appearance before the spectator's eyes (A 299).

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They have discovered that sulpho-cyanide of potassium can be employed for invisible red, that ferro-cyanide of potassium will serve for blue, and tannin for black.

They are thus able to produce a three-color invisible photograph on a canvas, which will stand the casual inspection of the ordinary sitter.

These chemicals are all invisible when dry, but if they are gently sprayed with a weak solution of tincture of iron the picture will gradually appear,

and the operators have been very ingenious in methods whereby they will place the canvas, while waiting for the spirit to paint the portrait, in such a unique position that

the spray can be mechanically applied;

and thus they are able to bring the picture before the very eyes of the sitter

without having to remove the canvas from the room to be sprayed.

16. THE CONCLUSION

[Compare M 157-58.]

4:15.1 As far as the physical phenomena of spiritualism are concerned, what only can be the conclusion of any intelligent, sound-minded person who has taken the time to investigate the subject? From the earlier performances of the Fox Sisters down to the latest medium to be exploited at the present time, even the half-hearted and amateurish investigations on the part of untrained observers have resulted in disclosing a continuous trail of deception and fraud. Whatever may be said in behalf of the claims regarding the “psychic” and more mental and spiritual aspects of spiritualism, which we have not yet considered, there remains no ground—absolutely no scientific basis—for the physical and materializational claims of modern spiritualism. Many large rewards, both in this country and in Great Britain, still remain unclaimed, which can be had any day by any medium who can, under fair test conditions, demonstrate the possibility of physical phenomena being produced by spirit agencies. **And in my opinion these rewards will remain unclaimed as the years roll by.**

4:15.2 The facts are that the mediums cannot stand the test. Those engaged in the production of physical phenomena, materialization, etc., are all deliberate, conscious frauds.

In twenty-five years, I have not come in contact, in any capacity whatsoever, with a single physical manifestation medium, but what I have been able either to detect the fraud, or impose those conditions which would have led to immediate detection, but which were very wisely rejected by the medium. That is, in the case of every medium we have gone in to investigate we have immediately detected fraud, or the medium has declined further investigation or flatly refused the fair and reasonable conditions imposed.

4:15.3 I talked with Mr. Thurston at luncheon one day while he was here recently. I think he is the greatest magician on the stage today. He said that it is his belief that all performances done for money and as a commercial proposition are fraudulent.

4:15.4 No sooner does some medium hail from a foreign shore, or rise up to eminence from our own native heath, than some shrewd investigator effects her exposure. Most eminent mediums are short-lived—their career is meteoric. They cannot stand the searchlight of truth. They are not able to withstand the acid test of investigation. Sooner or later our spirit idols fall, faith in our favorite medium is shattered,

[Yet, notwithstanding all this, the persons of that faith are ready to be duped again, so great in the ordinary man is the love of the occult and the desire for positive proof of individual immortality (A 14).]

but with child-like trust and confidence we go forth in quest of a new idol, saddened and somewhat wiser, but none the less easily beguiled into the belief that, whereas one was false, our new find will be true.

And scores of mediums who go on successfully for a season, would be exposed much sooner if they were investigated, not by their friends and believers in the cult, as is usually the case, but by hard-headed men of scientific training—by those who know the laws of physics, chemistry and electricity, and those who habitually employ these very tricks as a part of their professional careers, as is the case with magicians and similar experts who deal with rope-tying, handcuffs, and other sorts of sleight-of-hand performances, designed to mystify and entertain the public.