

Chapter 3 — The Modern Spiritualist Movement

from *The Truth About Spiritualism* (1923)

by

William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

© 2011, 2013, 2019, 2020 Matthew Block

Sources for Chapter 3, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) John Herman **Randall**, *The New Light on Immortality: or, The Significance of Psychic Research* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921)
- (2) Alexander James **Grieve**, “Swedenborg, Emanuel,” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed., 1911)
- (3) Carlyle B. **Haynes**, *Spiritualism versus Christianity* (Nashville, Tennessee: Southern Publishing Association, 1918)
- (4) Joseph **McCabe**, *Is Spiritualism Based on Fraud?: The Evidence Given by Sir A. C. Doyle and Others Drastically Examined* (London: Watts & Co., 1920)
- (5) Edward T. **Bennett**, *Psychic Phenomena: A Brief Account of the Physical Manifestations Observed in Psychological Research* (New York: Brentano’s, 1909)
- (6) **Mme.** Dunglas **Home**, *D. D. Home: His Life and Mission, Edited, with an Introduction by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1921)
- (7) Isaac K. **Funk**, D.D., LL.D., *The Psychic Riddle* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1907)
- (8) **Seybert Commission**, *Preliminary Report of the Commission Appointed by The University of Pennsylvania to Investigate Modern Spiritualism in Accordance with the Request of the Late Henry Seybert, with a Foreword by H. H. Furness, Jr.* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1920 [original copyright 1887])

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source first appears, or where it 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.
- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (h) **Red** indicates either an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source, or an otherwise questionable statement on Sadler's part.

Work-in-progress Version 13 juli 2011
 © 2011, 2020 Matthew Block
 Revised 28 May 2013, 22 July 2014, 2 March
 2019, 19 July 2020

I: THE NATURE OF THE NEW LIGHT (Randall 1)

The rise of modern spiritualism

is usually associated with the Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York, though Professor Hyslop regards Swedenborg who died in 1772 as the real originator (R 5).

“SWEDENBORG, EMANUEL” (Grieve)

SWEDENBORG (or Swedberg), Emanuel (1688-1772), Swedish scientist, philosopher and mystic, was born at Stockholm on the 29th of January 1688....

... In no field were Swedenborg's researches more noteworthy than in those of physiological science (G n.p.)

In 1734 he also published *Prodromus philosophiae ratiocinantis de infinito et causa finali creationis*, which treats of the relation of the finite to the infinite, and of the soul to the body, seeking to establish a nexus in each case as a means of overcoming the difficulty of their relation.

III — THE MODERN SPIRITUALISTIC MOVEMENT

3:0.1 MY RESEARCHES have led me to believe that

the modern cult of spiritualism,

as we understand it and recognize it today,

really had its origin with the teaching and doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772).

Swedenborg was a physiologist of more or less note, who lived in Stockholm.

His first published works dealing with philosophy and theology appeared in 1734,

SOURCE

From this time he applied himself to the problem of discovering the nature of **soul** and spirit by means of **anatomical** studies (G n.p.).

He travelled in Germany, France and Italy, in quest of the most eminent teachers and the best books dealing with the human frame, and **published**, as the results of his inquiries among other **works**, his *Œconomia regni animalis*, (London, 1740-1741) and *Regnum animale* (Hague, 1744-1745; London, 1745) (G n.p.).

His friend Robsahm reports, from Swedenborg's own account to him, the circumstances of the first extraordinary **revelation of the Lord**, when He appeared to him [in 1745] and said, "I am God the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of the world.

I have chosen thee to unfold the spiritual sense of the Holy Scripture. I will Myself dictate to thee what thou shalt write."

From that time on he gave up all worldly learning and laboured solely to expound spiritual things.... His life from 1747 was spent alternately in Sweden, Holland and London, in the composition of his works and their publication, till his death, which took place in London on the 29th of March 1772 (G n.p.).

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

and it was about at this time that he began his extensive researches in physiology and **anatomy** for the purpose of locating the human **soul**,

and he **published** numerous **works** dealing with his researches along this line.

He claims to have had **Divine revelations**

in which were revealed to him the philosophy of the spiritual world,

and he published numerous works containing these alleged revelations.

1. THE FOX SISTERS

3:1.1 While it is probably true that Swedenborg was the father of modern spiritualism,

II: THE ORIGIN OF SPIRITUALISM (Haynes 14)

Origin of Modern Spiritualism (Haynes 16)

Modern Spiritualism

had its beginning in Hydesville, N.Y., in the year 1848 (H 16).

In the year mentioned, a farmer by the name of John D. Fox lived in Hydesville, near Rochester, N.Y.

He was the father of six children, two of whom were living at home. There were Margaret, who was fifteen years of age, and Kate, aged twelve.

They had been recently moved,

and they found the house they occupied disturbed, especially at night, by peculiar noises.

They attributed these noises at first to mice and rats, and then to a loose board.

They soon discovered, however, that these noises were distinct and intelligent rappings (H 16).

[contd] After retiring on the night of March 1, 1848, the parents and children sleeping in the same room,

American spiritualism, as a spectacular phenomenon,

seems to have had its origin in Hydeville, near Rochester, New York, in 1848.

Near this little village there lived a farmer by the name of John D. Fox.

He had a family of six children, two of whom (daughters) were living at home.

It seems that the Fox family, who had but recently moved into this home,

were early disturbed by peculiar nocturnal noises.

These strange sounds were attributed to rats and mice, loose boards, and what not,

but ere long it appeared that these noises were more or less systematized,

and so it is recorded that

on the night of March 1, 1848, when the parents and the two daughters had gone to bed in the same room,

these rappings commenced with greater violence than usual. Mr. Fox arose and tried the window sashes, and, finding them all secure, was about to return to his rest, when Kate, observing that when he shook the sashes the rappings seemed to reply, turned in the direction from which the sound seemed to come, and snapped her finger several times, at the same time exclaiming, "Here, Old Splitfoot, do as I do" (H 16-17).

[contd] Instantly the rappings replied with sharp, distinct taps. This frightened the girls so that they had no further desire to continue the conversation with "Old Splitfoot." But the mother continued to cultivate his acquaintance

until she received a message which professed to come from the spirit of a man by the name of Charles B. Rosma.

This message informed her that this man, Rosma, had been murdered in that very house some years before (H 17).

these noises, or as they were later called, "rappings," became unusually violent.

It would seem that Mrs. Fox became inordinately interested in these phenomena,

and she embarked upon a program of further acquaintance and experimentation with this strange force or intelligence which had so unceremoniously invaded her quiet and unpretentious home.

According to report, it seems that

Mrs. Fox succeeded in eliciting the information that these rapping forces purported to be the spirit of a dead man by the name of Charles B. Rosma,

and as time went on

the spirit communicated to Mrs. Fox the information that this man Rosma had been murdered several years before in the house in which these manifestations were taking place.

Other Messages Received (Haynes 18)

[contd] The members of the Fox family continued to press their inquiries upon the intelligence which was back of the rappings,

and they received other messages

which were **verified**.

Margaret Fox soon developed very remarkable occult powers in her continued intercourse with the spirits.

By the aid of the spirits lost articles were found, hard questions were answered, and difficult problems solved.

Neighbors came in to investigate. Some came from long distances to look into this “rapping delusion,” as it was first called, and finding the answers given by the spirits to be in the main correct, many became convinced that

the Fox girls were actually in communication with the spirits of the dead (H 18).

3:1.2 By this time the other members of the Fox family had resumed interest in these manifestations,

and for miles around the news of the “rapping spirits” and the Fox sisters had spread,

and as time went by many messages were received from what purported to be this dead man Rosma’s spirit returned to the scene of his murder.

It is claimed that many of these messages were **verified**,

and **Margaret Fox began to develop very extraordinary occult ability** as time went on,

and many remarkable seances were held by her with the rapping spirits.

Scores of people who attended these seances were led to believe that

the Fox girls were really in communication with the spirits of dead and departed souls.

III: THE MYSTERY OF RAPS AND LEVITATIONS (McCabe 42)

These raps were clearly associated with the two girls,

Margaretta (aged fifteen) and Katie or Cathie (aged twelve).

A third, a married elder sister, named Leah—at that time Mrs. Fish, and later Mrs. Underhill—came to Hydesville,

and, at her return to Rochester, took Margaretta with her.

Leah herself was presently a “medium.”

The excitement in rural America was intense.

Mediums sprang up on every side, and the Foxes were in such demand that they could charge a dollar a sitter.

The “spirits,” having at last discovered a way of communicating with the living, rapped out all sorts of messages to the sitters (M 44).

These raps were always clearly associated with the two daughters,

Margaret (aged fifteen) and Kate or Cathie (aged twelve).

A third, a married elder sister, named Leah—at that time Mrs. Fish, and later Mrs. Underhill—came to Hydeville,

and, on her return to Rochester, took Margaret with her.

Leah herself was presently a “medium.”

The excitement in the neighborhood was intense.

Throughout the whole country

mediums sprang up on every side, and the Foxes were in such demand that they could soon charge a dollar a sitter.

The “spirits,” having at last discovered a way of communicating with the living, rapped out all sorts of messages to the sitters.

2. SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA

3:2.1 As near as I can ascertain, the concrete, organized, spiritualistic movement in the United States had its origin and spread from this New York episode.

Spiritualism, it should be known, is similar to socialism, in that there are many ramifications and branches of the cult, while there are tens of thousands who believe in its essential tenets who are not formal communicants of the organized movement. Later on, the phenomena of spiritualism were so enlarged as to include such stunts as table tipping, slate writing, and subsequently to the actual materialization of alleged spirit entities.

II: HOW GHOSTS ARE MADE (McCabe 17)

The real crusader of this important department of the movement [*i.e.* ghost materializations] was Mrs. Underhill,

the eldest of the three Fox sisters who founded Spiritualism (M 19).

She was an expert in fraud and a woman of business.

Until her own sisters gave her away, forty years after the beginning of the movement, she was never exposed;

and even an exposure by her sister in the public Press and on the public stage in New York made no difference to her career.

She was the Mme. Blavatsky, the Mrs. Eddy, of Spiritualism (M 19).

[contd] Leah began in 1869, every other branch of Spiritualist conjuring having now been fully explored, to produce a ghost at her sittings (M 20).

3:2.2 So the real pioneer of American commercial mediums was Leah, (Mrs. Underhill),

the eldest of the three Fox sisters who virtually founded American Spiritualism.

She was an expert in fraud and a woman of business.

Until her own sisters gave her away, forty years after the beginning of the movement, she was never exposed;

and even an exposure by her sister in the public press and on the public stage in New York made no difference in her career.

She was the Mme. Blavatsky, the Mrs. Eddy, of Spiritualism.

In 1869 she first produced "Ghosts" at her sittings.

A few months later a wealthy New York banker, Livermore, lost his wife, and the “hyenas”—as Sir. A. C. Doyle calls mediums who prey on the affections of the bereaved—hastened to relieve his grief and his purse. For four hundred sittings, spread over a space of six years, Katie Fox impersonated his dead wife. As Katie Fox confessed in 1888 that Spiritualism was “all humbuggery—every bit of it,” we need not enter into a learned analysis of these sittings (M 20).

III: THE MYSTERY OF RAPS AND LEVITATIONS (McCabe 42)

Margaretta Fox married Captain Kane, the Arctic explorer, who often urged her to expose the fraud, as he believed it to be.

In 1888 she found courage to do so (*New York Herald*, September 24, 1888).

She and Katie, she said, had discovered a power of making raps with their toe-joints (not knee-joints), and had hoaxed Hydesville.

Their enterprising elder sister had learned their secret, and had organized the very profitable business of spirit-rapping.

The raps and all other phenomena of the Spiritualist movement were, Mrs. Kane said, fraud from beginning to end.

She gave public demonstrations in New York of the way it was done;

Her sister Katie (so Katie later confirmed) impersonated the dead wife of a New York banker.

3:2.3 Confession of the Fox Sisters.

Margaret Fox married Captain Kane, the Arctic explorer, who often urged her to expose the fraud, as he believed it to be.

In 1888 she found courage to do so. (*New York Herald*, September 24, 1888.)

She and Katie, she said, had discovered a power of making raps with their toe-joints, and had hoaxed Hydesville.

Their enterprising elder sister had learned their secret, and had organized the very profitable business of spirit-rapping.

The raps and other phenomena of the Spiritualist movement were, Mrs. Kane said, fraud from beginning to end.

She gave public demonstrations in New York of the way it was done;

SOURCE

and in October of the same year her younger sister Cathie confirmed the statement,

and said that Spiritualism was “all humbuggery, every bit of it” (*Herald*, October 10 and 11, 1888).

They agreed that their sister Leah (Mrs. Underhill), the founder of the Spiritualist movement and the most prosperous medium of its palmiest days,

was a monumental liar and a shameless organizer of every variety of fraud.

That a wealthy Spiritualist afterwards induced Cathie to go back on this confession need not surprise us (M 45).

II: THE MOVEMENT OF OBJECTS WITHOUT ANY APPARENT PHYSICAL CAUSE (Bennett 16)

TESTIMONY COLLECTED BY FREDERIC W. H. MYERS. (Bennett 26)

[contd] Next in order of time come two papers by Mr. F. W. H. Myers,

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

and in October of the same year her younger sister Cathie confirmed the statement,

and said that Spiritualism was “all humbuggery, every bit of it” (*Herald*, October 10 and 11, 1888).

They agreed that their sister Leah, (Mrs. Underhill), the founder of the Spiritualist movement and the most prosperous medium of its palmiest days,

was a monumental liar and a shameless organizer of every variety of fraud.

That a wealthy Spiritualist afterwards induced Cathie to go back on this confession need not surprise us.

3. SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

3:3.1 Spiritualism, in its earlier history in England, was given a great impetus by

one Mr. F. W. H. Myers,

who took it upon himself,

under the title of “Alleged **Movements of Objects** without Contact, occurring not in the Presence of a Paid Medium.” They are published in vol. vii. of the *Proceedings* of the **Society for Psychical Research** (B 26).

[Compare B 15.]

The two following cases in the first article present the strongest evidence.

(1) **THE ARMSTRONG CASE.**—Mr. George Allman Armstrong, of 8 Leeson Place, Dublin, and Ardnacarrig, Bandon, writes an account dated 13th June 1887.

After vouching for the perfect good faith of the small group of experimenters, he describes in detail the movements of a table. The “rising” was generally preceded by a continuous fusillade of “knocks” in the substance of the table. When the knocks had, as it were, reached a climax, the **table** slowly swayed from side to side like a pendulum.

It would stop completely, and then, as if imbued with life, and quite suddenly, would rise completely off the floor to a height of twelve or fourteen inches at least. It nearly always **came down with immense force**, and on several occasions proved destructive to itself, as the broken limbs of the table used at Kinsale could testify (B 27).

in connection with the **Psychical Research Society**, to collect together evidences of **moving objects**,

noises, lights, etc., in connection with spirit seances.

It was he that reported the **famous Armstrong case**

where the **tables** pranced about

and on one occasion **came down with such destructive force** that the legs were broken.

(2) A **BELL-RINGING** CASE.—Mr. Myers, in introducing this case, says: “The usual hypotheses of fraud, rats, hitched wires, &c., seem hard to apply....” The following is an abstract:—

... Nine bells hung in a row just inside the area door, opposite the kitchen door, and there was one bell—a call bell—on the landing at the top of the house.

Mr. D. frequently saw several of these bells ringing at once, the ringing being sudden and very violent, louder, he believed, than they could be rung by pulling the handles. [Etc.] (B 27-28)

The second paper by Mr. Myers is devoted exclusively to some “strange experiences” which occurred several years previous to 1891, at the village of Swanland ... There were no intellectual phenomena, nothing but the apparently meaningless throwing about of pieces of wood—directed, however, by some intelligence, so as to attract attention without doing harm (B 30).

XI: THE SUMMING UP OF THE WHOLE MATTER (Bennett 121)

As long ago as the year 1874, Sir William Crookes

gave permission for the reprint of a limited number of copies of various articles which he had contributed to the periodical literature of the day. These, with some other original matter, were published under the title of “Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism” (B 124).

[INTRODUCTION, by **Sir Oliver Lodge** (B 9)]

He also gave publicity to extraordinary **bell-ringing,**

and other stunts which were supposed to be of spirit origin.

3:3.2 It should be stated that,

as far back as 1874, Sir William Crookes

became attracted to spiritualism

and read papers and made many addresses concerning his experiences with alleged mediums.

His interest in the movement considerably anti-dated that of **Sir Oliver Lodge.**

4. HOME—THE PATRON SAINT OF SPIRITUALISM

3:4.1 D. D. Home seems to have been the central character around which spiritualism in Great Britain had its origin some fifty or sixty years ago,

[INTRODUCTION, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Mme Home iii)]

and Sir A. Conan Doyle elevated him to the pedestal of the Patron Saint of Modern Spiritualism.

I: SCOTLAND AND AMERICA (Mme. Home 1)

[contd] Daniel Dunglas Home was born near Edinburgh, March 20, 1833.

3:4.2 Home was born near Edinburgh in 1833,

His parents both came of ancient Scottish families. Through his mother, whose maiden name was McNeill, he was descended from a Highland family in which the traditional Scottish gift of the “second-sight” had been preserved.

of a Scottish family that is reputed to have had a traditional “second sight” as a part of its heredity.

Mrs. Home possessed it herself;

Home’s mother is supposed to have been a sort of clairvoyant, or to have been otherwise endowed with second sight.

and while her son was still an infant she had a vision concerning him that found fulfilment more than twenty years later at Fontainebleau (MH 1).

He was a sensitive, delicate child, of a highly nervous temperament, and of such weak health from his infancy that he had not been expected to live (MH 1).

He was a delicate child, of highly nervous temperament.

An aunt, who had no children of her own, adopted Home; and his infancy was passed in her care at Portobello.

He was raised by an aunt,

SOURCE

When he was nine years old, she and her husband emigrated to America, and took with them the boy whose life was destined to be so wonderful (MH 1).

A few weeks before [he went with his relatives to live in Troy, New York], Home was, as usual, with his friend Edwin in the woods (MH 2).

On this occasion—it was in April, 1845 or 1846—Edwin was full of a ghost-story that he had just read (MH 2).

When Edwin's story was told, the two boys set themselves to discuss it, and also the possibility of such apparitions of departed spirits appearing to those whom they had loved on earth. With the romance of their age, they ended by agreeing to bind themselves by the same promise that the two lovers in the legend had taken; and exchanged vows on the spot, in the most solemn manner they could devise.

A few weeks later, Home went to live at Troy. He was then about thirteen years of age (MH 2).

[contd] In the month of June following,

... at the moment when the boy, having finished his prayers, was slipping into bed, [the moon's] light was suddenly darkened. Startled by this phenomenon, Home looked up, and beheld a vision that he has described in the opening chapter of his *Incidents in My Life*, published in the year 1863 by Messrs. Longman:—

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

who, when he was nine years of age, immigrated to America.

3:4.3 Home's spiritualistic experience seems to have had its origin in 1845,

when he and a young companion were out in the woods

reciting a ghost story,

and they agreed between themselves that whichever one should die first he would subsequently reappear to the surviving member of the duet.

They were soon separated by Edwin's parents moving away,

and Home, a few months afterwards,

is reported to have had a vision one evening, shortly after retiring,

SOURCE

“[T]hrough the darkness there seemed to be a gleam of light, which I cannot describe ... This light increased; and my attention was drawn to the foot of my bed, where stood my friend Edwin.... He looked on me with a smile of ineffable sweetness, then, slowly raising the right arm, he pointed upward; and making with it three circles in the air, the hand began slowly to disappear. Then the arm, and finally the whole body, melted away.... I was speechless and could not move, though I retained all my reasoning faculties. As soon as the power of movement was restored I rang the bell, and the family, thinking I was ill, came to my room, when my first words were—‘I have seen Edwin—he died three days ago’” (MH 2-3).

[contd] A day or two afterwards a letter was received, announcing the death of Edwin after a very short illness (MH 3).

[See MH 4, re Hume’s hearing loud blows at the head of his bed one night, and raps on the table where he and his aunt were sitting at breakfast the following morning.]

Much to the displeasure of his aunt, who was a member of the Kirk of Scotland,

he had joined the Wesleyan communion; but her opposition to this step was so persistent and violent that

her nephew finally compromised matters by leaving the Wesleyans for the Congregationalists, whom she regarded with less dislike (MH 4).

About two years earlier, the knockings at Rochester had attracted public attention. Home’s aunt had heard of them from some of her neighbours, and believed them to be works of the Evil One (MH 4).

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

after which he said to the family: “I have seen Edwin. He died three days ago.”

And two or three days afterward word was received announcing the death of his companion.

3:4.4 From now on ensue a succession of marvelous events, demonstrations, etc.,

much to the displeasure of his aunt, who was a member of the Church of Scotland,

and who opposed her nephew’s Wesleyan connections so much that

he finally joined the Congregationalists as a compromise.

These events, it should be borne in mind, are occurring

about two years after the famous knockings of the Fox sisters at Rochester had attracted so much attention.

II: ENGLAND AND ITALY (Mme. Home 23)

Home's presence in London soon became known, and without having courted it, he found the notice of English **society** attracted to him.

More requests for *séances* were pressed upon him than he could gratify; and among other noted personages of the day, **Lord** Brougham expressed a desire to investigate the phenomena. [Etc.] (MH 23)

[It is true that he did not charge so much a sitter.

He had a more profitable way. He lived—apart from his wives and a few lectures (supported by his followers)—on the generosity of his dupes all his life (**McCabe** 8).]

I: SCOTLAND AND AMERICA (**Mme. Home** 1)

The results of numerous applications made to the friends of Mr. Home in both the Old and New Worlds, together with the **correspondence** preserved by him, enable me to supply most of the names omitted in the *Incidents*, and in various cases to add the personal testimony of investigators concerning their experiences.... My only difficulty will be to contain the record of a life so full of wonderful and various incident within the limits of a **single volume** (MH 7).

3:4.5 It would seem that Home, after all, created much more of a stir in England than he had in America. There were no Fox sisters there to share attention with him. He was the whole show in Great Britain.

The best of **society** took an interest in Home's manifestations;

earls, **lords**, and what not became his patrons,

and while Home does not seem to have sought to commercialize the immediate seance,

it is evident that he received liberal support from numerous sources.

It would require a book twice the size of this **little volume** to reproduce all the **letters** from prominent people

SOURCE

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

II: ENGLAND AND ITALY (Mme Home 23)
III: ITALY AND FRANCE (Mme Home 40)
IV: FRANCE AND RUSSIA (Mme Home 56)

VI: ENGLAND (Mme. Home 91)

[contd] Friends in Russia had been urging Mr. Home to re-visit them; but finding that there was no immediate prospect of his making the journey, two of their number, Count Alexis Tolstoy and Count Steinbock-Fermor, determined to go to him instead; and he had accordingly the pleasure of welcoming them to London about the middle of June, 1860. [Etc.] (MH 91)

V: ENGLAND (Mme. Home 69)

[contd] The second residence of Mr. Home in England lasted from November, 1859, unto the last week of July, 1860. He returned a third time in the following winter, and was in England during the whole of 1861 (MH 69).

[See Chaps. IV, V, VI.]

[See MH 71, re Faraday's theory of "involuntary muscular action".]

"He" (Faraday) "prescribed certain conditions which it would have been utterly impossible for Mr. Home, whether that gentleman be the apostle of a new science or a mere pretender and humbug, to accept..." (MH 71).

who were willing to swear to the remarkable things they saw at the seances conducted by Home from time to time.

In the years that followed, Home visited Italy, France, and Russia, where he conducted many seances,

and became a fast friend of Alexis Tolstoi.

3:4.6 From 1859 to 1861 he seems to have been back and forth between the continent and England,

holding seances for the highest society and royalty,

and it was about this time that the scientist, Faraday, contemplated an investigation,

but it seems that his conditions were not altogether acceptable to the medium

Faraday's second condition, of open and complete examination, Home would as readily have accepted as he afterwards did in the case of Crookes; but was it conceivable he should accept this? Mr. Robert Bell was so assured he would not, that he did not think it worth while even to transmit to Mr. Home a proposal so insulting;

and accordingly the negotiations between Bell, Sir Emerson, and Faraday were dropped and never resumed (MH 72).

At these *séances* in Hyde Park Place, and at others that Home held in London during 1860 and the years following, many of the best-known figures in English society were present. The effect on some was to convert them to a belief in the spiritual origin of the manifestations; others preserved a suspense of judgment as to their origin, while admitting the facts (MH 76).

VIII: AMERICA, RUSSIA, AND ENGLAND (Mme. Home 129)

At this visit [to the Spiritual Athenæum in London], Mrs. Lyon, an absolute stranger to Home, entered into conversation with him concerning his work, *Incidents of My Life*, which she declared herself to have read with much interest (MH 141).

A day or two afterwards she made a gift of £30 to the funds of the Athenæum, and followed this act by astounding Mr. Home with the declaration that she had taken a great fancy to him, and was determined to adopt him as her son, and settle a handsome fortune on him (MH 141).

and so the test never came off.

By 1860 a number of influential converts to spiritualism had been made in England.

3:4.7 In London Home met Mrs. Lyon,

who subsequently took a fancy to him, adopted him—

Early in December, 1866, Mr. Home formally assumed the name of Home-Lyon.

he changing his name to Home-Lyon—

Without saying anything to him, Mrs. Lyon wrote on this occasion to the same solicitor:—

“ 7th December, 1866.

“MY DEAR MR. WILKINSON,—On the occasion of my adopted son taking the name of Lyon, I wish to give him a little surprise. I intend to add six thousand pounds to the twenty-four I have already given him, making a sum total of thirty thousand. . . . Yours very truly,

and settled upon him twenty-five or thirty thousand pounds at first,

“JANE LYON” (MH 144)

[contd] Mr. Wilkinson in reply once more suggested that, as he had known Mr. Home long and intimately, she should employ another solicitor to transact the business. Mrs. Lyon refused ... and very soon afterwards informed him of her desire to transfer a further sum of £30,000 to Mr. Home (MH 144).

and subsequently another thirty thousand pounds,

V: PHYSICAL PHENOMENA ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PRESENCE OF DANIEL DUNGLAS HOME (Bennett 41)

The gift to Home by Mrs. Lyon of a large sum of money, the subsequent lawsuit, and the judgment in accordance with which the money was returned to its original owner, excited much attention at the time (B 54).

all of which ended in a lawsuit

This episode with Mrs. Lyon has probably had more effect than any other circumstance in causing the feeling of aversion which large numbers of people regard Home and all his doings (B 54).

which detracted much from Home's popularity,

Mr. H. Arthur Smith further says: "There was also an admitted letter from Mrs. Lyon to Home, in which she stated that she presented him with the £24,000 as an *'entirely free gift.'* This, she said, was written by her at Home's dictation, **under magnetic influence**" (B 55).

[She swears that Home brought a fictitious message from her dead husband, ordering her to adopt Daniel and endow him, and she gave him at once £26,000. She swears that, when Home's birthday came round, another fictitious message ordered her to give Daniel a further fat cheque, and she gave him £6,798 (McCabe 9).]

XIII: 1876-1886 (Mme. Home 216)

To relate in detail Home's life during these last years on earth would simply to tell a story of great suffering patiently and cheerfully borne. In place of this, let me, now that I approach the close of my work, state briefly the substance of many communications made concerning the life beyond this. The **greater part** of such communications were given through Home while he was in a **state of trance**. [Etc.] (MH 225)

In June, 1886, the complication of which he had foretold the **danger** supervened, and attacking the **lungs**, proved quickly fatal (MH 229).

Home's grave is at St. Germain. A plain cross of white marble rises from a Calvary, on which is engraved: "Daniel Dunglas Home. Born to earth-life near Edinburgh (Scotland), March 20th, 1833. Born to spirit-life: 'To another discerning of spirits' (1st Corinthians, 12th chapter, 10th verse): **June 21, 1886**" (MH 230).

as Mrs. Lyon claimed that the money was extracted from her **under spiritualistic influence**.

She claimed that her deceased husband's spirit, speaking through Home as a medium, directed that she give this money to Home.

The courts decided against Home, and **ordered the money returned to Mrs. Lyon**.

3:4.8 It seems that in the **later years** of Home's life he received the **majority** of his communications in a **state of trance**.

Home died of his **lung** trouble and other affections

on **June 2, 1886**.

3:4.9 The careful study of Home's life and the perusal of his writings suggests that there is indeed a great paucity of "leading lights" in the modern spiritistic movement—or else the present day sponsors for this new religion would hardly settle upon such a character as Home for its Patron Saint. His whole career was "fishy" from first to last; though notwithstanding the unsavory lawsuit and the adverse judgment of the British courts, directing him to return the fortune he had secured from Mrs. Lyon under the guise of spirit messages from her dead husband—notwithstanding the utter preposterousness of the impossible claims and assertions of Home—his fanatical followers believed in him to the end, and today they would commemorate him, in the words of Doyle, as

PROLOGUE (Mme. Home vii)

By sacrificing himself to every description of research, he enabled scientific investigators to establish the existence of forces that until his day had remained unknown; and he founded belief in a spirit-world on those remarkable evidences of identity that will remain the bases of the true modern spiritualism (MH vii).

"the basis of the true modern spiritualism."

5. REV. STANTON MOSES

[*Note:* Moses lived and worked in England, never visited America, and became known there only after his death.]

3:5.1 About the time that Home was in vogue in England, the Rev. Stinton Moses **was occupying the center of the stage in America.** Reverend Moses seems, like Home, to have made little attempt to commercialize his seances, but he was one of the earlier and more pretentious advocates of spiritualism **in America.**

VI: PHYSICAL PHENOMENA ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED IN THE PRESENCE OF WILLIAM STANTON MOSES (Bennett 58)

LIGHTS WITHOUT APPARENT PHYSICAL CAUSE (Bennett 72)

[contd] The phenomena of **Light** without any apparent physical cause was a frequent one with Mr. Stinton Moses, and the manifestations were of a very varied character (B 72-73).

The seances of Reverend Moses are said to have been particularly characterized by whispering voices in the magic circle, as well as by numerous **lights** which appeared from time to time.

III: THE PRODUCTION OF SOUND WITHOUT ANY APPARENT PHYSICAL CAUSE (Bennett 31)

Some little time later, at a similar seance at the [house of prominent London spiritualist, Mr. Thos. Everitt, Mrs. Everitt being the medium], the sitting was terminated by the singing of a hymn by three or **four** soft, **gentle** voices purporting to be "direct" voices,

The voices are reported to have sometimes, blended into a **quartet** or a choir which could be heard in **gentle** meter

SOURCE

which sounded as if they proceeded from the top of the room close to the ceiling.... I can only compare it to the singing of a choir of boys' voices, high up out of sight in Truro Cathedral, which I had heard many years before (B 34-35).

V: A CHAPTER OF GHOSTLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (McCabe 77)

He worked always in the dark, or in a very bad light;

and his doings are mainly described by his trustful friend and host, Mrs. Speer (M 87).

[Mr. Stainton Moses' most intimate friends were Dr. and Mrs. Stanhope T. Speer (B 60).]

Like Home, and only a few of the quite holiest mediums,

he was occasionally lifted off the ground;

or, which is, of course, the same thing, he said that he was.

Raps were common when he was about.

Automatic writing of the most elevating (and most inaccurate) description flowed from his pencil.

Lights floated about the room;

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

as if the music were being wafted to the hearers from a considerable distance.

Of course, these manifestations always took place in a perfectly dark room.

The majority of the seances of the Reverend Moses were conducted for his friend, Doctor Spear.

3:5.2 Like Home,

the friends of Moses claim that he was frequently lifted off the ground,

or that he told them of experiences in which he had been levitated.

So-called "rappings" were often associated with this medium,

but his chief spirit pursuit seemed to pertain to automatic writing.

From his hand, by automatic writing, there would ensue a flood of elevating and interesting, but always more or less inaccurate, material.

As previously noted,

lights were frequently seen floating about the room,

and once or twice he dropped and broke a bottle of phosphorus in the dark (M 88).

A pretty variation of musical mediumship was next introduced by Mrs. Annie Eva Fay, another American fraud with whom Sir W. Crookes made solemn scientific experiments (M 81-82).

She came to London in 1874, and everybody soon went to see and hear the “fascinating American blonde” at the Hanover Square Rooms (M 82).

[See M 82.]

By an accident at one of her performances

Mr. Podmore was enabled to see how she did it, and the secret has long been known.

The tapes supplied had to be fastened in such a way

and on one occasion the medium was so unfortunate as to drop and break a bottle of phosphorus

whose fumes soon penetrated the whole atmosphere of the darkened seance room.

6. LATER SPIRITUALISTIC LIGHTS

3:6.1 During the half century that spiritualism has been masquerading in this country and Great Britain, a vast number of leading lights have come and gone. Among this number may be mentioned:

3:6.2 *The Case of Mrs. Fay.*

A few years back the world was entranced by the astonishing seances of Mme. Fay.

In her performances, she was always accompanied by her husband, the Colonel, and she practiced and prospered until one time

an accident occurred in one of her performances

which was attended by Mr. Podmore,

and he made the discovery of just how she liberated herself.

She had perfected a method of fastening the tapes that bound her hands together,

that she could with great speed slip them up her slender arms and get into a working position.

Maskelyne also exposed her,

and trade fell off so badly that she made him an offer, by letter, to go on his stage and, for payment,

show how all the tricks were done.

She had by that time converted hundreds to Spiritualism (M 83).

VI: THE SUBTLE ART OF CLAIRVOYANCE (McCabe 93)

Mrs. Piper, the great American clairvoyante, the medium whose performances are endorsed as genuine even by men who regard Spiritualism as ninety-eight per cent. fraud, began her career as a “psychic” in 1874 (M 101).

so that she could liberate herself at will and carry on the numerous stunts,

all of which, of course, were done in a perfectly dark room.

A London Museum proprietor¹ also subsequently exposed Mrs. Fay,

and her income as a medium was so reduced that she offered, by letter, to go on his stage, for a fee,

and show how all of her tricks and those of other mediums were done.

This sort of thing becomes a real tragedy when we come to think that

by this time she had been the means of converting hundreds, if not thousands, to the cause of spiritualism

and influencing them to become devout believers in the supernatural.

3:6.3 *The Interesting Mrs. Piper.*

Mrs. Piper is probably one of the most interesting specimens of mediumship that ever attracted attention in America, or who was ever investigated by anything like what could purport to be a scientific commission.

Mr. Podmore, who, in spite of his high critical faculty, was taken in by this episode [*i.e.* Mrs. Piper's four-year period of transmitting messages by her then spirit control, "George Pelham"],

thinks that telepathy alone can explain the wonderful things done. He does not believe in ghosts.

Mrs. Piper's "subconscious self," he thinks, creates and impersonates these spirit beings,

and draws the information telepathically from the sitters (M 102).

I am, you see, not choosing "weak spots," as Sir A. C. Doyle said, and am not quite so ignorant of psychic matters, in comparison with himself, as he represented (*Debate*, p. 51). I am taking the greatest "clairvoyant" in the history of the movement,

and in precisely those respects in which she was endorsed by Dr. Hodgson and the American S. P. R.

and Sir O. Lodge and all the leading English Spiritualists.

She failed at every crucial test.

Mrs. Piper was even able to take in the shrewd and critical Mr. Podmore;

although Podmore would not accept the hypothesis of "spooks" or "spirits," he was disposed to grant the genuineness of some of her performances and to explain them on the hypothesis of telepathy.

He resorted to the theory that it was Mrs. Piper's subconscious self that thinks and creates these spiritual beings,

and that she elicits communications from her sitters by making telepathic contact with their respective minds.

3:6.4 Now when we are discussing Mrs. Piper, the reader should bear in mind that

we are considering a woman who was regarded as the "greatest clairvoyant in the history of the movement"

and that she was endorsed by Doctor Hodgson and his American Society for Psychic Research;

and that she was further endorsed by Sir Oliver Lodge and the leading British lights in the firmament of spiritism.

But Mrs. Piper always fell down when it came to the actual test—

when it came to "brass tacks," in the language of slang.

SOURCE

Phinuit, who knew so much,

could not give a plausible account of his own life on earth,

or how he came to forget medicine (M 103-04).

When Myers

died in 1901 and left a sealed envelope containing a message,

she could not get a word of it.

When Hodgson died in 1905 and left a large amount of manuscript in cipher,

she could not get the least clue to it.

When friends put test questions to the spirit of Hodgson about his early life in Australia,

the answers were all wrong (M 104).

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

Her spook, Phinuit, who could communicate so much through Mrs. Piper to the investigators, on subjects of a general nature,

could not give a sane or connected account of his own life on earth,

or give a plausible reason why he should forget the medical facts and knowledge which he had possessed when in the flesh.

3:6.5 When Myers,

the renowned English investigator and writer on spiritism,

died in 1901, and left a sealed envelope containing a test message,

Mrs. Piper could not get through to the investigators a single word of this message.

When her long time sponsor, Hodgson, died in 1905 he left behind a large amount of manuscript in cipher,

but Mrs. Piper was unable to catch the least clew to his writings

and this experiment added but another to the long list of dismal failures to make good under real test conditions.

Even when she claimed to have called up Professor Hodgson from the grave,

when his friends put test questions to her, or to what purported to be his spirit speaking through Mrs. Piper as a medium, about his early life in Australia,

her answers were all consistently wrong.

SOURCE

She was completely baffled when a message was given to her in Latin,

though she was supposed to be speaking in the name of the spirit of the learned Myers,

and it took her three months to get the meaning (out of a dictionary?) of one or two easy words in it.

She gave a man a long account of an uncle whom he had never had;

and it turned out that this information was in the *Encyclopædia*, and related to another man of the same name.

In no instance did she ever give details that it was impossible for her to learn in a normal way,

and it is for her admirers to prove that she did not learn them in a normal way,

and, on the other hand, to give a more plausible explanation of what Dr. Maxwell, their great authority, calls her “inaccuracies and falsehoods” (M 104-05).

VII: MESSAGES FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD (McCabe 109)

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

3:6.6 She was completely baffled when a message was given to her in Latin,

though she was supposed to be speaking in the name of the spirit of the learned Myers,

and it took her three months to get the meaning (out of a dictionary?) of one or two easy words of it.

She gave a man a long account of an uncle whom he never had;

and it turned out that this information was in the *Encyclopedia*, and related to another man of the same name.

In no instance did she ever give details that it was impossible for her to learn in a normal way,

and it is for her admirers to prove that she did not learn them in a normal way,

and, on the other hand, to give a more plausible explanation of what Doctor Maxwell, their great authority, calls her “inaccuracies and falsehoods.”

3:6.7 *The Famous Bangs Sisters.*

Among the most interesting of the physical-manifestation mediums of the recent past were the Bangs Sisters of Chicago, whom I have seen operate very many times.

[Carrington] tells in his *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism* of a pair of Chicago mediums—the same Misses Bangs who painted spirit pictures before your eyes, as I have previously described—

whose method was extraordinarily difficult to detect (M 120).

Here were two quiet and inoffensive-looking spinsters earning a good living by deceptive practices

(this and the spirit-painting trick) which they had themselves, apparently, originated, and which taxed the ingenuity of an expert conjurer to discover (M 121)

[*Note:* The Bangs Sisters were arrested in Chicago in April 1888 but continued in their trade till the 1920s.]

Mrs. Ebba Wriedt came from that perennial breeding-ground of great mediums, the United States, where she had long been known.

In 1912 she illumined London... *Light* had wonderful columns on Mrs. Wriedt's marvels (M 124).

[See M 125-26.]

They were the same Misses Bangs who painted spirit pictures right before the eyes of their sitters.

And many of their methods, it must be confessed, were very difficult to detect and expose.

3:6.8 These interesting maiden ladies continued their work of deceiving the public—

and they were very clever at it—

until they were finally rounded up by the Chicago police and their profitable business was brought to an end.

3:6.9 Sooner or later, it seems, the most brilliant mediums are detected; and this same thing occurred in the case of

the famous Mrs. Wriedt, the British medium

who flourished in England,

but who was caught in Norway.

III: COMMUNICATIONS PURPORTING TO COME FROM DR. RICHARD HODGSON. (Funk 47)

3. INTERESTING BUT SCARCELY EVIDENTIAL (Funk 71)

Rev. Mr. Wiggin, a noted platform medium, in his church in Boston on Sunday, January 28, 1906, announced—or was it, as he claims, the spirit control through him that made the announcement?—that Dr. Hodgson was present, and desired to speak [to his old friend in New York, Dr. I. K. Funk] (F 73).

The message unfortunately contains a very grave error. My wife did not die because of an “accident,” but, some thirty-five years ago, died of peritonitis in childbirth; but my mother, over two score years ago in Ohio, died exactly in the way described in the message except that she *stept* down from a chair, on a needle which resulted in her death—she did not fall. [Etc.] (F 75)

III: THE MYSTERY OF RAPS AND LEVITATIONS (McCabe 42)

Again let us, in order not to waste time, address ourselves at once to the classical case of Eusapia Palladino.

Your common or garden medium, with his uncritical audience, has a dozen ways of tilting and lifting tables and pulling furniture about the room about the room. [Etc.] (M 52-53)

3:6.10 And so the Rev. Frederick Wiggin

was able to put many things over, but when he got up against the shrewd Doctor Funk, the wires got crossed

and he got Doctor Funk’s mother’s death mixed up and attributed it to his wife.

3:6.11 *The Classic Palladino.*

Not many years ago, they brought to America the classic medium of continental Europe, Eusapia Palladino.

She was not the common garden variety of medium,

but the real thing.

Eusapia Palladino was an Italian working girl, an orphan,

who married a small shopkeeper of Naples. She remained throughout life almost entirely illiterate,

but she came in time to earn “exorbitant fees” (Lombroso’s daughter says) by her séances (M 53-54).

In 1910 the Americans tried her.

At one sitting Professor Münsterberg was carefully controlling her left foot, as he thought, when the table in the cabinet behind her began to move.

But one man had stealthily crept into the cabinet under cover of the dark,

and he seized something. Eusapia shrieked—it was her left foot! (M 56)

You all know how she came, heralded, to this country; how this

Italian working girl,

with no education, the daughter of a shopkeeper in Naples,

held the attention of scientists and investigators,

and how she earned fortunes through her profession.

And you will recall how

the late Professor Hugo Munsterberg and his assistants trapped her in this country.

In the midst of her wonderful performance,

she uttered an outlandish scream.

3:6.12 The seance was suddenly terminated.

One of Professor Munsterberg’s assistants had crawled along on the floor,

and in the midst of the performance

had seized the medium’s leg.

She was carrying on her wonderful performance by means of the dexterous use of her toes, handling instruments, and causing the rest of the phenomena associated with her seance.

From 1905 to 1907 she was rigorously examined by the General Psychological Institute of Paris. They reported constant trickery and evasion of tests. Sitters were not allowed to put a foot on her right foot

because she had a painful corn on it.

One of her hands must not be clasped by the control

because she was acutely sensitive to pain in that hand.

She will not allow a man to stand near and do nothing but watch her.

She wriggles and squirms all the time, and releases her hands and feet.

She learns that, in a photograph they have taken of one high "levitation" of a stool,

it is plainly seen to be resting on her head,

3:6.13 It should be borne in mind that

the investigators and observers of Eusapia were not allowed to put a foot on her right foot

because of the fact that she claimed that that foot was "afflicted with a painful corn."

At the same time we should remember that

one of her hands must not be clasped by the investigator

because of the further fact that she "was acutely sensitive to pain in that hand."

Under no circumstances would this famous medium ever allow a man to stand near her with nothing to do but intently observe her performances.

It would seem that she was able to

release her hands and feet from almost any ordinary control by means of her constant wriggling and squirming.

3:6.14 One of the early frauds Eusapia was detected in was effected by means of an investigator who sneaked in a camera

and took an exposure of the levitation of a stool high in the air.

When the photograph was developed

it was plain to be seen that the stool was resting on the medium's head.

so she allows no more photographs of this. And so on (M 56).

VII: MESSAGES FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD (McCabe 109)

The supreme artist in [the trick of receiving messages from spirits on slates] was Henry Slade,

whom Sir A. C. Doyle regards as a genuine intermediary between the lofty spirits of the other world and ourselves.

As Truesdell's account of the way in which he unmasked Slade as early as 1872 contains one of the richest stories in the whole collection of Spiritualist anecdotes, one would have thought that a story-teller like Sir A. C. Doyle could not possibly have forgotten it (M 112).

Truesdell paid the customary five dollars,

and received pretty and edifying, but inconclusive, messages from the spirits.

Incidentally he detected that the spirit-touches on his arms were done by Slade's foot,

to distract his attention;

but he could not see the method of the slate-trick.

From that time on she developed a peculiar phobia for photographers or anyone carrying anything that in the least resembled a camera of any size.

3:6.15 *Slade, The Slate-Writer.*

Truesdell undertook a serious investigation of Slade.

Having paid the customary five dollars,

he received a number of interesting and pretty messages purporting to be of spirit origin,

but wholly unsatisfactory and unconvincing to the investigator.

He soon discovered that the supposed spirit touches on his arm were executed by Slade's foot.

He concluded that they were performed

in order to divert his attention away from being too closely concentrated on the slate-trick.

SOURCE

However, as the main theme of the messages

was an exhortation to persevere in his inquiries

(at five dollars a sitting to the medium), he made another appointment.

It was on this occasion that he left a misleading letter in his overcoat in Slade's hall,

and found the spirits assuming that he was "Samuel Johnson, Rome, N.Y."

But before Slade entered the room,

or while Slade was going through his overcoat-pockets,

he rapidly overhauled Slade's room.

He found a slate with a pious message from the spirits already written on it,

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

3:6.16 The main theme of the messages

which most sitters received on Slade's trick-slates

was in the nature of an exhortation to persevere in the investigation of things spiritual,

and of course this meant—although not directly implied—that

the investigator would pay the medium, Slade, five dollars a sitting.

How else could these investigations be suitably or successfully carried on?

3:6.17 Truesdell tells of a subsequent visit to Slade

at which time he left a misleading letter in his overcoat pocket out in Slade's hall,

and subsequently found that the all-wise spirits assumed that he was "Samuel Johnson, Rome, New York."

But before the medium had entered the seance room,

and while he was presumably out in the hall,

going through the investigator's overcoat pockets,

Truesdell rapidly overhauled Slade's room.

He found a slate containing a carefully prepared and pious message, purporting to come from the spirits,

SOURCE

signed (as was usual) by the spirit of Slade's dead wife, Alcinda.

Beneath the message Truesdell wrote

"Henry, look out for this fellow—he is up to snuff! Alcinda,"

and replaced the slate.

Slade came in, and gave a most dramatic performance.

In his contortions,

under the spirit-influence,

he drew the table near to the hidden slate,

and "accidentally" knocked the clean slate off the table.

Of course,

he picked up the *prepared* slate.

His emotions can be imagined when he read the words which Truesdell had written on it.

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

already written and signed, as was Slade's custom, with the name of his dead wife, Alcinda.

Directly underneath this message on the slate Truesdell wrote:

"Henry, look out for this fellow—he is up to snuff! Alcinda."

Then he carefully replaced the slate,

leaving everything exactly as he found it.

Presently Slade came into the room and gave a most dramatic performance,

during which he indulged in numerous contortions,

and under the apparent influence of invisible spirits

he gradually drew the small table on which his slates rested nearer and nearer the location of the hidden slate,

whereupon he "accidentally" knocked the clean slate, which was about to be used for test purposes, off the table.

This of course

was nothing more nor less than a ruse to give him an excuse for

picking up the prepared slate,

which by this time was near at hand.

The reader can easily imagine what Slade's emotions must have been when he read the words which Truesdell had written on the slate

SOURCE

After a little bluster, however, he laughingly acknowledged that he was a mere conjuror,

and he told Truesdell many tricks of his profession (M 112-13).

[See M 113-14.]

V: A CHAPTER OF GHOSTLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS (McCabe 77)

Henry Seybert, a Spiritualist, left a large sum of money to the University of Pennsylvania

on the condition that the University authorities would appoint a commission to examine into (among other things) the claims of Spiritualism (M 86).

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION FOR INVESTIGATING MODERN SPIRITUALISM (Seybert Commission)

[contd] A Commission was accordingly appointed, composed as follows:

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

underneath his message but a few minutes previously.

However, the medium soon overcame his embarrassment

and after a little confusion he “laughingly acknowledged that he was a mere conjuror,”

and told the investigator who had outwitted him about many of the tricks of his profession.

He was many times arrested and exposed in both this country and in England.

3:6.18 *The Seybert Commission Findings.*

Henry Seybert bequeathed funds to be used by the University of Pennsylvania

in the scientific study of the phenomena of spiritualism.

A committee, consisting of ten eminent men,

Dr. William Pepper, Dr. Joseph Leidy, Dr. George A. Koenig, Professor Robert Ellis Thompson, Professor George S. Fullerton and Dr. Horace Howard Furness; to whom were afterwards added Mr. Coleman Sellers, Dr. James W. White, Dr. Calvin B. Knerr and Dr. S. Weir Mitchell (SC 5).

By the advice of Mr. Hazard we addressed ourselves first to the **investigation of Independent Slate Writing**, and through his aid a séance for this purpose was arranged with a noted Medium, Mrs. S. E. Patterson (SC 6).

[Very few mediums would face the professors, and those who did were shown to be all frauds (M 86).]

When the slate is held under the table, knees and feet and clothing exert no deleterious effect, but the gaze of a human eye is fatal to all Spiritual manifestation; although to one of our number, on three occasions, a pocket **mirror**, carefully adjusted, unknown to the Medium,

gave back the reflection of fingers, which were clearly not Spiritual, opening the slates and writing the answer (SC 15-16).

[See endnote.]

made a thorough-going **investigation of slate writing**,

trance mediums, and other mediumistic phenomena.

and came to the conclusion that the whole **sordid** mess was fraudulent.²

They caught their mediums again and again in cheating,

and by means of **mirrors** and other devices

were able to detect the deceptive methods practiced by the mediums.

And subsequent investigations have confirmed the findings of the Philadelphia investigation.³

SOURCE

3: THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUALISM

The Seybert Commission in its report says:

An eminent professional juggler performed, in the presence of three of our Commission,

“An eminent professional juggler performed, in the presence of our commission,

some Independent Slate Writing far more remarkable than any which we have witnessed with Mediums.... We were utterly baffled. For one of our number the juggler subsequently repeated the trick and revealed its every detail (SC 19-20).

some independent slate writing far more remarkable than any we have witnessed with mediums.”

3:6.19 And so no matter whether the investigation is conducted by University Professors or by the Scientific American—so far, at any rate, the mediums have all turned out to be cheats—they have all been detected in fraud.

1. John Nevil Maskelyne (1839-1917) was an English stage magician and inventor.
2. We request your honorable body to note that this Report is preliminary and that we do not consider our investigations in this department [*i.e.* Independent Slate Writing] as finally closed, but hold ourselves ready to continue them whenever favorable circumstances arise (SC 21).
3. Slade was one of these [fraudulent mediums], and the Pennsylvania professors, wondering how any trained man could be taken in by so palpable a fraud, sent a representative to Leipsic to investigate the experiences of Professor Zöllner and the three other German professors who had endorsed Slade. The gist of his report was that of the four professors one (Zöllner) was in an early stage of insanity (he died shortly afterwards), one (Fechner) was nearly blind, the third (Weber) was seventy-four years old, and the fourth (Schreibner) was very short-sighted, yet did *not* (as Sir. A.C. Doyle says) entirely endorse the phenomena! (M 86)