

Review of the Wells Case by H. J. Newton.

(Continued from Fourth Page.)

honest and earnest in his searchings for truth as myself. I don't believe he would purposely do a dishonest act, and those who judge him otherwise do not know him as well as I do.

When I commenced these investigations, my position was not a favorable one for procuring the services of a medium for materialization to sit for me under test conditions.

As a rule if I suggested to a medium the propriety of sitting under test conditions, the chances were that I would receive abuse instead of a respectful answer; almost always the medium would get in a passion and ask if I took them to be a fraud.

If mediums could be emancipated from these pernicious influences and be made to see, in its true light, their position and relations to an anxiously inquiring public, and fully understand and comprehend why they are mediums, and the part they are called upon to take in a world of skepticism, doubt and uncertainty, there would be no more exhibitions of anger and impatience.

At some future time I will trace the causes which have produced these results and show it to be the legitimate and inevitable effect of the development of the race.

Such an one comes to you hoping against hope. You tell him his loved ones come to him; he asks you to make conditions so there can be no mistake. Have you any right to get angry under these circumstances? I say emphatically no.

Every medium for physical manipulations should, for their own good, as well as for the good of the cause, insist upon having test conditions. I wish every medium could realize that a large majority of those who come to them to investigate are in the mental condition above described; and when they ask you for bread don't give them a stone.

After the exposure of Gaffrey and the offer of Mr. Pogram had been made, I concluded to determine, if possible, if conditions ordinarily in use, making such periodical fascos almost certain, were necessary; always causing great scandal and injury to the cause of Spiritualism.

After formulating in my mind the construction of my cabinet, I attended one of Mrs. Wells's sances for the purpose of holding a short conversation with Father Ballou, the controlling spirit. I desired to learn if my plan was feasible and if he had any suggestions to make.

Wells what Father Ballou had said. She replied: "If he said he would succeed he surely will, for thus far he has fulfilled every promise he ever made to me."

After a few sittings with a company made up entirely of acquaintances, forms came from the vacant compartment of the cabinet. I made this statement the following Sunday at the conference, and at the same time stated that I had no settled idea how it was done, for aught I knew she (Mrs. Wells) was taken through the net, and if so, it would be no more wonderful than many well recorded facts of phenomena which occurred through the mediumship of the Potts brothers at Harrisburgh, a few years ago, also through Mrs. Guppy of London and at the "Miracle Circle" held in this city in the early days of Modern Spiritualism.

Mr. Wm. R. Tice having heard my statement at the conference, expressed a desire to witness the manifestations. Accordingly he was present by invitation at the next sance and several which followed. He declared himself satisfied with the manifestations and at the conference the Sunday following made a statement in harmony with this, and furthermore offered fifty dollars to any one who would show or explain how such phenomena could occur except by spirit power.

Mr. Wm. Tice took the platform after his brother had left it, and said he was very sorry for he had watched carefully every evening when he had been present and had never discovered the least movement and did not believe that it did move. At the following sance he decided to test the matter and prove to his brother that he was mistaken.

The tin when found had not been straightened out in the manner indicated as necessary.

He said he knew of no other way to account for the changed position of the tins, unless perhaps the spirits had had something to do with it. I told him his experiment, however it affected his mind, was very far from conclusive to me when all the circumstances were taken into account.

Next, Mr. Tice thinks that the medium came out of the cabinet and passed into the vacant compartment partially concealed by passing under the curtains. This he thinks she did after the cabinet had been secured to the floor and consequently could not be moved out.

These are two events Mr. Tice thinks preceded the final one and gave added weight to evidence of deception on that occasion.

the floor and could not be moved, and the strips of wood nailed over the curtain to the center partition, then the medium willfully and knowingly removed sufficient of the netting to admit her to pass into the unoccupied compartment and then re-adjusted the netting, securing it with the nails.

Now let us look at his conclusions of what transpired on that evening, in the light of some very important facts. The circumstances immediately preceding his entering the cabinet have been published, and need not be repeated. On entering the medium's compartment he found her chair vacant and her dress and shoes lying upon the floor.

The light for these sances was furnished by a burner of the chandelier in the front parlor. I went immediately and turned up the light and on returning, great was my surprise in looking at the white object which had fallen within a foot of me, to see a female form lying on its back perfectly motionless.

After the ladies had assisted her in arranging her dress, Mrs. Newton persuaded her to go into the front parlor and be seated. Mrs. Newton temporarily left the room and when she returned she found, much to her surprise, that Mrs. Wells had left the house alone, although Mrs. Thayer was waiting to accompany her.

Mr. Tice and myself entered the cabinet together and my first question was "How is the netting?" We commenced a thorough examination of it from the compartment intended to be occupied only by the spirits and found it apparently intact. A light was furnished and on close examination it appeared as if some of the nails had been removed and put in new places.

That you may fully understand this very important part of my statement, I will explain that the netting was drawn around the frame and nailed on the side in the unoccupied compartment, consequently passed under the frame, resting on the carpet, which was securely screwed to the floor, and we experienced no little difficulty in getting the net out from under it.

He said, "There, you see, it can be done." I asked him to adjust it as we had found it, but he declined to attempt it saying, "Oh! that is not necessary." I replied that I thought it was, and commenced myself to see if I could adjust it.

Some of the things that transpired during the short time that I was out of the room have been related in detail by Mr. C. P. Sykes and published in the Banner of Light, of March 5th, 1887.

I wish again to call attention to the white object that was thrown from the cabinet, and which made no more concussion when it struck the floor than did the parts of the dress. This is agreed to by all who witnessed it as far as I am aware.

If this had been Mrs. Wells in her normal condition, would there not have been a heavy jar when such a body struck the floor? Of this fact there is no doubt in my mind, and in order that there should be as little error as possible about this, Mrs. Newton went with Mrs. Wells and saw her weighed, and the scales balanced exactly at one hundred and eighty-nine pounds.

In looking at all the circumstances attending this extraordinary case, there is hardly one more significant than this, and must be disposed of in a rational manner by those who still hold to the theory of conscious fraud on the part of Mrs. Wells.

When a person attends a sance for physical manifestations and insists upon a change of condition, he exhibits either his ignorance or his dishonesty. For more than twenty years have I held this position, arrived at by careful observation, and whenever I have wanted conditions different from those furnished at public sances, I have taken the medium to my own house and by repeated experiments and careful noting of results, I feel myself qualified to predict with

a degree of certainty, what the results will be in the presence of a good medium under changed conditions.

In inaugurating the sance with Mrs. Wells, I availed myself of these former experiences and at first had only a few invited friends. There were no striking results the first few evenings, but when the spirit forces had magnetized the cabinet and surroundings the manifestations began to develop and continue to increase in importance until interrupted by admitting the public.

My position in these experiments with Mrs. Wells is, in some important respects, very different from that of others connected with them. Not only Mrs. Wells' mediumship and the possible conditions under which materialization could be produced, but Spiritualism itself for me was on trial.

The Monday following the unfortunate Friday evening this medium was brought to my house, or rather forced to come by one of her band, a distance of nearly four miles. She was immediately controlled and the spirit went over the whole ground, giving minute details of what had happened and advising us what course to pursue.

A few weeks later and when it had been decided to resume the sances as soon as the physical condition of Mrs. Wells would admit, Mr. J. J. Morse, who was speaking for the First Society of Spiritualists, and stopping with us over Sunday, on our return home after the evening lecture while conversing upon various matters, was suddenly entranced and controlled by a spirit who gave us his name.

Mr. Charles Partridge reported himself to me as present in the cabinet on this eventful Friday evening. A few days afterward I went to a well known rapping medium and Mr. Partridge again made his presence known to me. I asked if he would answer me mental questions; his reply was in the affirmative.

A few evenings later I was present at a dark sance when a spirit patted me on the shoulder and in a whisper gave me the name Partridge, and gave as a reason why he would not answer my oral questions that it was because of the prejudice of the medium.

The questions calling for rational answers are: Have the spirits through these different mediums on these special occasions been falsifying, who have always been truthful heretofore? If so, is there a fountain in this dense wilderness of uncertainty from which truth unadulterated can be obtained?

Before closing, I wish again to call the attention of investigators to the great importance of a more careful study of the complex and intricate nature of the problems they will be called upon to solve. When you thoroughly realize the fact that the medium at materializing sances, while entranced is used in a variety of ways, and is frequently brought out of the cabinet to enact different parts, the necessity for absolutely test conditions becomes emphasized; because it must be apparent to a very indifferent observer, that when such facts are admitted and acted upon, a greater opportunity is offered for those who are disposed to be dishonest to practice fraud.

the medium stood before us unveiled and clothed in her dark dress as when she entered the cabinet at the beginning of the sance. The spirit then placed her arms around the medium and assisted her back into the cabinet. In a case like this the only test necessary, is to have the cabinet so arranged as to preclude the possibility of the introduction of a confederate.

In view of all the circumstances attending this remarkable case, together with the facts which have been developed during the last two months in the sances held with Mrs. Wells, the results of which are published this week by the company for whom she sat exclusively, I believe the popular verdict will be that I and those who agreed with me, have been fully justified in the view taken of this case, and that Mrs. Wells stands today exonerated to the fullest extent, from every charge made against her honor and integrity as a medium.

June 22, 1887. HENRY J. NEWTON.



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