

MEDIUMS

UNMASKED

AN EXPOSÉ OF
MODERN SPIRITUALISM
BY AN EX-MEDIUM

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, } ss.

BE IT KNOWN, that on this twenty-seventh day of May, personally appeared before me and on oath declares and says, that the manuscript setting forth the expose of Spiritualist Mediums is founded on facts and such expose is absolutely matters of truth.

MRS. JULIA E. GARRETT.

Sworn and subscribed before me this 27th day of May, A. D. 1892.

JOSEPH E. WISEMAN,

[SEAL] Notary Public in and for the
City and County of Los Angeles,
State of California.

PREFACE.

I am impelled to write this little book from a sense of duty ; that I may, in some manner, make amends for the evil I have done as a medium.

My father was a Christian minister and I was raised as a Christian, but I married a Spiritualist, and, at his earnest request, entertained a number of celebrated mediums at our house. From them I learned all the " tricks of the trade," which, from the beginning, I thoroughly despised. After my husband's death, being left with three young children and no means of support, I was, in a measure, forced into an occupation which inspired me with disgust and which I have frequently tried to leave, but have always been driven back to, until now, when I have, thank God ! done with it forever.

Having a natural gift of mind reading, I proved an adept pupil, and soon knew all there was to be learned.

I have sat with almost every medium of note ; have read all the leading literature on the subject, and for twelve years have been before the public as a medium for " independent slate writings," materialization, raps, platform tests, pictures, clairvoy-

ance and clairaudience, trumpet talking, and every other phase of mediumship. During all this time I never had an *expose*, never had a line written or published against me, or any scandal connected with my name. I was considered peculiar by mediums, because I never would have anything to do with magnetic healers and other free lovers, for reasons given in this book.

After this long experience I now solemnly declare that *all*—absolutely ALL—the so-called spiritual phenomena are false ; and, furthermore, that the mediums well know it, being engaged in the nefarious business of deliberately deceiving foolish people for money, in such varying ways as I point out in the following pages.

The more I saw of mediumship—the deeper I went into its wickedness—the more earnestly my soul cried out against it. I hated the whole thing with all my being, but I had a family to support, and, not having perfect faith in God, I was afraid that I and my children would starve if I gave it up. Yet I prayed daily for deliverance. I never went into a dark seance, or sat down to give a slate writing, or went up to the hall to hold a public meeting, that I did not ask God to forgive me.

One day, in October last, I was going up to

Foresters' Hall, on Main street, in this city of Los Angeles, to assist the notorious Mrs. Rich in giving a mediums' meeting. In the street, opposite the hall, a meeting was being held by a Christian band—either Holiness or Salvation Army, I do not know which. With a heart that yearned for consolation I paused to hear their songs and prayers. A young colored man was telling how God had brought him out of sin. My eyes filled with tears, and I then and there resolved that this should be the last Sunday which I would spend in a meeting of mediums and Spiritualists.

On the Tuesday night following this Sunday matinee I gave my usual materializing seance. I had a severe cold and was ill, but I went into the cabinet and "spooked" as usual, taking a still more severe cold, which resulted in pneumonia. I lay for many weeks at death's door, and am now writing this in my sick room. I will never be strong again, and have but faint hope of ever getting well, as my lungs are badly affected. My soul, however, is at peace with God. I have prayed earnestly for forgiveness, and feel that I am indeed forgiven.

With that feeling came a strong impression that it was my duty to expose this terrible fraud.

Some of the local Spiritualists, who heard that I was contemplating such a step, have tried hard to dissuade me, and some mediums have, I am told, left town, fearing the coming *expose*. The arguments of these people have no weight with me. Nor am I, indeed, under any obligations to them. In the early stages of my sickness some of the Spiritualists came to visit me, but seeing that I was seriously ill and likely to have a long spell of sickness, they ceased coming, much to my relief. Since then the Christian people of Los Angeles have done all in their power for me. None of them, have, however, influenced or advised me to write this exposure. I do it from the prompting of my own conscience.

I know there are many good, honest people who firmly believe in Spiritualism, and I feel sorry when I think how mediums deceive them, for there is neither truth nor honesty in mediumship. If God spares my life, I shall spend the remainder of my days in undoing, as far as lays in my power, the evil I did while I was known as a medium, and in exposing what I consider the greatest fraud on earth—so called “spiritual manifestations.”

JULIA E. GARRETT.

Los Angeles, May 16, 1892.

INTRODUCTORY.

The philosophy of Spiritualism teaches a conscious existence after death and communion with departed friends. Taking this belief as a basis, mediums have played their tricks. The leading ones I have explained in the following pages.

Spiritualists do not believe in God. They regard Jesus as a wonderful medium. They deny the existence of hell, but can locate the spirit world, or heaven, at a moment's notice.

Spiritualists prate much of harmony, yet they fight continually among themselves. In every town you find a first and second society of Spiritualists, and sometimes many others. Spiritualists have never, to my knowledge, built any meeting-houses or schools, or founded any charitable institutions. They have no organization, or even a fund to assist sick members. They do no good, but much harm. In all my experience, I have known but one Spiritualist who was, in any degree, a benefactor to humanity.

One peculiarity of Spiritualists is that they all

want to be mediums. All over the country there are people "sitting" for development of slate writing and other gifts. In this little work I tell you how you may get slate writing and other manifestations. You may "sit" till the day of your death, but you will never get them in any other way.

It is, surely, time that the public should be warned against this dangerous fraud, which is spreading so rapidly. Mediums are growing bolder and doing worse deeds from day to day. Were I to tell one-half of the ill I have known mediums to do it would make a large volume. I know one medium in Los Angeles, whose husband played spook to a poor, credulous German woman, making her believe that he was Jesus Christ. At one time, while playing the rôle, he told her that Christ was sadly in need of some fine new shirts and a handsome stud to wear with them. The foolish woman, thinking she was doing the Master a great service, bought the shirts and a handsome pearl stud. The wife of this scoundrel, who, as a medium, is a great favorite with the Spiritualists of Los Angeles, "worked" the brother of this same German woman in the guise of his departed wife, obtaining from him new dresses, jewelry and many other things.

I have never known a medium who did not hate and despise Spiritualism. Could a body of good old mossback Spiritualists overhear a lot of mediums talking among themselves their eyes would be opened. No medium believes in the return of spirits, and anyone of them would, I believe, be frightened half to death at sight of a ghost.

RAPPING.

This, the oldest and simplest of all Spiritual manifestations, originated in the toe-joints of the Fox sisters, in Hydeville, New York, fifty years ago. It was then that the great fraud of modern Spiritualism was first presented as a grand revelation to a credulous public of American citizens, who, as Barnum truly said, delight to be humbugged.

I have been called the finest rapping medium known. Colonel Esterbrook of Omaha wrote a long and flattering article, which was published in the *Religio-Philosophic Journal*, of Chicago, concerning the raps produced by me. Here is the manner in which the spirits were induced to rap for me. The trick was taught me by a medium, and I, in turn, have taught many others :

Wear a pair of smooth, high boots. Place your foot firmly against a leg of the table and your hands grasping those of the sitter, on top of the table. Direct the sitter's attention to any point on the table, then press gently with the foot. The slipping of the leather against the wood makes

perfect "spirit raps." Wood is a good conductor of sound, and the raps seem to be on top of the table. A little practice will enable you to make any desired number of raps at a time. Three raps mean "yes;" two "not sure," and one "no."

Some mediums place the tips of the fingers firmly on top of the table and, by a dextrous movement, slip them on the varnished surface, thus making very good raps.

Like other so-called spiritual phenomena, raps are never produced by supernatural means. They are all simply conjuring tricks—and very simple ones, at that.

Some mediums, who live in their own houses, have electric wires concealed in their rooms, so as to produce raps and mysterious sounds. This is, however, not at all common, as mediums are usually on the move from place to place.

TRANCE.

This is one of the greatest fakes known to the profession, and is widely practiced, because anyone can undertake this repulsive fraud.

The medium has only to shut her eyes, give a few spasmodic gasps and jerks, and then announce that she is "under control," or entranced—generally by some Indian or departed celebrity. Thereupon the admiring and wondering believers sit open-mouthed, smiling, applauding, and swallowing the most idiotic twaddle that ever fell from mortal lips, outside of an insane asylum. The dupes, however, think it is fine.

After all my experience, I have yet to hear the first sensible word uttered by a medium claiming to be entranced. They are the most heartless liars and frauds of all mediums.

Usually, trance mediums have a little Indian girl for a "control," with some fanciful name. Her silly utterances, through the medium, are accepted by the believers as superior wisdom from the other world.

These trance mediums often do much serious harm, as they will tell the most barefaced falsehoods and slander the most virtuous people, claiming that "Snowdrop," "Walk-on-the-Water" or "Sunbeam" are doing the talking. Of all classes of mediums—magnetic healers excepted—these trance mediums are the most to be despised and shunned by decent people.

MAGNETIC HEALING.

The mediums who practice this branch of the "profession" are the lowest and vilest of all.

A man or woman who does not know the difference between a shoulder-blade and a ham-bone tacks "doctor" on his or her name. They then announce themselves with much flourish of trumpets, as "magnetic healers." I will here confine my remarks to the men who practice this business. The women "healers" are not fit to be mentioned even in an *expose* of Spiritualism.

The healer claims to be controlled by some renowned doctor, long dead, or by some big Indian chief. He usually assumes the trance, and then commands his subject to undress entirely, as "magnetism" will do no good unless he applies it to the naked body. He is, usually, big, coarse and licentious, and in this manner can gratify his low animal nature.

More harm has been done by these people, right here in Los Angeles—more homes broken up, more young girls ruined—than the world dreams of.

Two old, white-haired reprobates started here in this business not long ago. One was a magnetic healer, the other professed to have "developing power." Both had a preference for young girls. Through the columns of the *Times*—God bless the *Times*!—the one who had the "developing power" was exposed, and the other said no more about being a healer.

This class of mediums should be driven, either out of the country or to honest work. My aversion to magnetic healing and other forms of licentiousness gained me their hatred, which I cordially reciprocated.

TRUMPET TALKING.

This phase of physical mediumship is so simple a trick that a few words will suffice to describe it fully.

The medium, or a confederate, talks to you through a tin horn. That is all there is to it.

I was present once at a trumpet seance when a light was suddenly turned on. The medium, with the horn to her lips, was standing not a foot from me, giving an old man a message from his spirit child. The *expose* was complete. There were over thirty people in the room, and she was made to return to each one the dollar which they had paid at the door.

This form of humbug is fast going out of use. Few mediums now use the horn. It has been exposed too often, and is such a glaring fraud that even most mediums are ashamed to practice it, which is saying much.

TABLE TURNING.

This practice is also fast going out of fashion. People have laughed it down. It is such a senseless manifestation that it is hardly worth describing.

A party of people seat themselves at a small table, all placing their hands thereon very lightly. The medium asks whether there are "any spirits present." She then presses her hands in whichever direction she wishes the table to tip. That is all.

Of late, as aforesaid, even Spiritualists have tabooed this form of "spirit communication."

SPIRIT PICTURES.

This phase of mediumship has been exposed many times. It is not common, as the medium must learn photography or hire an assistant.

The negative of the sitter is first made, and the portraits of the "dear departed" put on later. Another reason why few mediums now practice this fraud is that any photographer understands how it is done.

There is another kindred phase of humbug that is more popular and less understood. This is the making of oil and water-color paintings of deceased persons.

I know a lady who paid over \$300 for one of these oil paintings, thinking it was made by spirits. The medium was stopping with his wife in the town where the lady lives. At the time I was there also. The medium's wife, who is a very clever artist, was left alone for a moment in the lady's parlor. While there she obtained a good negative (by means of a small kodak which she carried in her pocket) from a picture hanging on

the wall. A few days later the lady (whom I will call Mrs. Brown) had a slate writing with the medium, and was told she could get an oil painting of her child, provided she would furnish the right "conditions" and so much money. Mrs. Brown did not know that the medium's wife was an artist, and having perfect faith in slate writing, easily fell into the trap.

She was told that she would have to wait some time for the necessary "conditions" to be perfect—that is, she would have to wait until the woman could finish the picture. I was called in several times to look at this picture as it progressed, and must say that it was an excellent copy of the crayon from which it was taken. The artist had added a white dove, to give the necessary "spiritual" effect.

One day the woman rushed into my rooms in an excited way. "Oh, Mrs. Garrett," she cried, "the devil is to pay!"

"Why, what is the trouble?" said I. "Has she 'caught on?'"

"No, but here I had the picture nearly completed. We intended to spring it on her in a couple of days, get our money, and leave this God-forsaken

town, when, all at once, we find our plans are shattered. Her sister has arrived, and we must now carry the picture to San Francisco and have her come up there."

"I am not 'on'" I remarked, smiling. "Please explain."

"Well, you see it is this way: I get the picture almost done, then we appoint a sitting with the person who is to get the painting. We have a canvas, which they mark and place on the easel. This, you understand, is simply a dummy. I then put the last touches on the painting, so that the oil will be wet, and we then produce the picture as fresh from the spirit world."

"Well, what has that to do with Mrs. Brown's sister?"

"Why, she is an artist, and, don't you see, she could detect the fact that the work was not all done at once, as we make it appear to be the case? We shall, therefore, have to explain that the conditions are not good here and carry the picture all the way home, just on account of that odious sister."

Mrs. Brown received notice from San Francisco, in due time, that she must go there, the "conditions" having become all right. She got

her picture, which I believe she values very highly.

The noted female medium, Diss De Bar, of New York, who was exposed and arrested for practicing this phase, caused it to fall into bad repute, even with the most gullible of believers.

SLATE WRITING.

This phase of mediumship I have practiced in the most successful manner during the past ten years, and, being "one of them," I have been admitted into the secrets of all the noted slate writers. I am, indeed, an authority on the subject. There is a sort of brotherhood, or masonry, among slate writers, materializing mediums and platform test mediums, but only among those who give full names. I will explain this later on.

When one medium says to another, "Oh, do not be afraid to tell me anything, for I am 'on,'" the speaker is at once recognized, as this word "on" is the password.

Automatic writing comes first. In this trick the medium holds the pen or pencil in his hand—or hers, as the case may be—and, pretending that his hand is moved by some supernatural power, writes anything that may come into his fertile brain, claiming it was done by spirit power.

This form of slate writing is not in very good favor. Not even a good, old, credulous Spiritualist

is often satisfied with it, so the mediums were forced to get up something a trifle more mysterious, and "independent slate writing" was originated. It is done in this manner:

Place a dark cloth over the table. The medium takes a chair on the opposite side to the "sitter." Put a small piece of pencil on a clean slate, which is held on the palm of the medium's hand. Then, underneath the table, where the "conditions" are right, drop the slate on the lap, take the small pencil—which must be flat, so as not to roll—and write the message. Sign whatever name is desired.

Practice makes this trick very easy. I could write so that anyone holding the muscles of my arm was unable to detect any movement. This is the easiest and safest method of obtaining "spirit writing," as all other phases of slate writing require fine work.

Sometimes sitters will demand the test of holding one of their hands over that of the medium. I always assented at once, and, hastily putting the slate under the table, would write a word or name, pick the slate up on my hand and say, "Why don't you put your hand under the table? I am waiting

for you." They would do so, and hold my hand tightly. Then, when the slate was withdrawn, with writing on it, the most skeptical would be convinced.

The most difficult phase of slate writing is using the pad and giving the manifestation in broad daylight and on top of the table, the sitter holding the slates with the medium. This requires much practice, a cool head and considerable shrewdness. No fool can do it, and slate writers are not common. They must be good judges of human nature, and vary their methods according to the character of their subject.

The pad used is made of blackboard cloth, that can be bought by the yard. Use a small slate and have the pad to fit it exactly. This pad conceals the writing. The medium wipes clean one slate, lays it down, and takes up the one which has the "spirit message," and which is concealed by the pad. She holds the slate firmly, her thumb keeping the pad down. She always sits with her back to the light, hence the eyes of the sitter are blinded, as well as his reason. The slate is wiped clean on one side and turned over to clean the other side, when the pad falls in her lap. That

side is cleaned and the slates placed together, never allowing the sitter to touch them after they are cleaned, for that would spoil the "conditions." It should be remembered that there is always a table between the medium and the sitter. The slates are then placed together and held by medium and sitter. After a few moments a slight scratching will be heard on the slates, which the medium makes with her finger nail but which the sitter believes to be the spirit writing the message.

Naturally time, circumstances and the character of the person you have to deal with govern the sitting. With some people you can always have the slates prepared, while with others you are obliged to let them see when you first sit down that the slates are clean. Have your pad in your pocket. Mediums always have an abundance of pockets. Show the sitter the slates, then give him the "ballot test," which I will explain. Tell him that your control wishes to write something automatically. Here is your chance to get the message on the slate. Drop it on your lap and and slip your pad over it, after which you are all right, as you can then proceed to wash the slates and give the message.

I did almost all my work in this manner, as I

always claimed to be—and was—a test medium. I therefore waited until I got all the names and tests before writing a message, as prepared. Mediums call these “stock slates,” and they will usually answer for any one.

Mediums, of course, talk all that twaddle preached by Spiritualists, about “influences,” “conditions,” “magnetism” and so forth, but I have yet to see the first one of them who believed a word of Spiritualism. They are a parcel of tricksters, who go into the business to make money, and the bigger frauds they are the more the Spiritualists appear to like them.

We almost always use the pad in public slate writing, although sometimes mediums will change the slates, but this is very hard to do. I never did it but once, when I made a success of it. I permitted the slates to be taken through the audience, examined, and returned to me, sitting behind a table. I had a large, flat pocket made in the front of my black dress, in which was a prepared slate. As a confederate handed me back the slates, I hastily made the change, without being detected.

One noted medium whom I know, who has

fooled people on both sides of the Atlantic, never uses the pad. He has a large, double slate, and writes all his messages right under the eyes of his sitters, pretending that he is writing under spirit control. He pretends to wash the writing off—but does not do so—at the same time withdrawing the attention of his sitters by exclaiming: “Oh, see that spirit on the other side of the table! Look! Look!” While the sitter looks for what he never sees, the medium turns the slates, closes them, and holding them to the shoulder, or on top of the head of his sitter, shakes and quivers and scratches away with his finger-nail. Soon the message comes.—

This medium was exposed and arrested in England and had a hard time of it to get free. A certain young nobleman, who was having a sitting with him, did not look for any spirit hands or lights, but kept his eyes on the medium, and caught him.

Another form of slate writing, and one much practiced, is to have the message on one side of the slate, which lies on the table, clean side up. Take another slate, which has no writing on, turn it it over, clean it, and lay it upon the other. Ask

your sitter to lay his hands on the slate with you, and his magnetism will help the spirits to write. Wait a few minutes, then open the slates, look surprised and say: "Why, I wonder what is the matter; there does not seem to be any power here!" This detracts the attention of the sitter from you for a moment. Then change the slates, with a lightning-like movement. Now you have the slate which is written upon above the other. Ask your sitter again to assist you. This time the "conditions" are favorable, and you give the message.

This is a very deceiving method. I know a celebrated slate-writer who not only gives his messages in this manner, but also beautiful crayon and oil paintings.

"Occult telegraphy" is a phase of manifestation used by some slate-writers. It is a clever little trick. A small machine is fastened under the table, so arranged as to make a clicking noise, similar to that produced by a telegraph instrument.

The sitter writes a ballot and places it in a box. The lid is fastened down and the medium, with pencil and paper, sitting opposite his subject, claims that he can read the answer given to the

ballot. The way it is done is this: The ballot falls into the lap of the medium, who opens it with his left hand, reads it, folds it up again, puts it back, and then writes the message.

No man or woman of any degree of intelligence would be deceived by this form of trickery, but when people begin to absorb Spiritualism, reason takes leave, and they become the easy prey of mediums.

Another form of slate writing, practiced by some mediums, is this: The medium's table is near a door, over which a thick curtain is hung. The medium sits with his back to this curtain. His slates lie on the table. He invites his sitter to carefully examine and wash them. "I am a genuine slate-writer," he assures his sitter, "in fact, I give you the very best tests. Now, please write all your questions; place them between the two slates, which you have cleaned, put this rubber band around the slates, which, as you see, I do not touch. Now, place them on the floor near my chair and hold my hands; also place your feet over mine."

The sitter does as requested, but before he has taken his seat the slates have been changed and a

pair of "dummies," as they are called, put in their place. In a short time another change is made, and a rap given as a signal. Then the medium tells the sitter to take up the slates and see if there is any writing. He usually finds—if he is a Spiritualist—a satisfactory message, answering all his questions.

There is but one way to catch this variety of medium. Refuse to sit with him near the curtain, lean forward over the table, without leaving your seat, place the slates on the floor and do not remove your eyes from them for one moment. Under these circumstances you will never get a message. The "conditions" will not be good.

To catch a medium who uses a pad, demand to see the inside of the slates after they are placed together. He will refuse, and tell you that "the spirits are now at work." Insist, and you will always find that the message is already written.

Those who hold the slates under the table in the dark have the best chance to practice fraud. Under whatever conditions, or by whatever method you get slate-written messages, of one thing rest assured—it is a humbug and a fraud.

There never was, nor ever will be a line written by a departed spirit.

A medium in San Diego once offered me \$1500 if I would give a slate writing to a certain person, and give him the same message which she and her husband had given him. This man had faith in me as a slate-writing medium, and, had I been so dishonest as to have accepted the medium's offer, she and her husband would have robbed him of about \$30,000 worth of property. During all my mediumship I would have nothing to do with robbery of this sort.

“PADDING.”

In the case of Mrs. McCarthy, recently published in the Los Angeles *Times*, the poor widow who was robbed and driven to insanity by Mrs. Florence K. Rich and other mediums, I refused to have anything to do with it, although I did give Mrs. Rich the “tests” on Mrs. McCarthy, as I did in other of her cases. As long as a medium is in the business, she is bound to give tests and names to all traveling mediums. We call it “padding.” When I first came to Los Angeles a medium who then resided on Spring street, and who is now in the East, “padded” me with tests on every Spiritualist in the city.

If Spiritualists and church people—the latter, I am sorry to say, are much given to running after mediums—only knew what a system of organized fraud exists between mediums they would not so readily swallow everything the latter say.

When I lived in San Diego, a certain medium, well known for her wonderful platform tests, was announced to appear. She was called an “or-

dained woman," and to read what the Spiritualist papers had to say about her one would suppose that she was half divine.

As soon as she arrived in San Diego she called on me with her husband and copied as much out of my book of tests as she desired and I gave them "points" besides. At her first sitting she cleared about \$300, and every name she gave to the public had been obtained from me.

PLATFORM TESTS.

Platform tests are among the meanest of all Spiritualistic frauds. The medium simply repeats what she gets from a slate-writer or materializing medium. All the work required of a platform medium is for her to commit the tests and names to memory, and twist them about in any fanciful manner that may occur to her.

Let us say that the test given to the medium by a slate-writer who is acquainted with the facts, is this: "Lily Jones, comes to her father and mother; died of consumption." The medium will give it out—while claiming to be entirely entranced by her "guide"—something after this fashion:

"Now, I feel a very sweet influence, but oh! so weak and—oh! I feel tired and depressed here"—putting her hands to her chest—"this beautiful spirit went out with that dread disease consumption. Now she comes nearer to me, and I hear a sweet voice say: 'Dear mother and father, I am very happy in my spirit home. I

come to see you every day and I hope you will visit all the mediums, so that I may be able to communicate with you very often. You did all you could for me, and I am now well and happy. In my arms I bring a bunch of lovely flowers, and with these white lilies will form my name over your heads,' " here the medium pauses a moment and then continues, "the name I see is Lily Jones. Does anyone recognize the spirit and the name? "

Of course, the father and mother both speak out and declare it to be all true.

Can a more heartless trick be imagined than this to prey upon the feelings of fond but foolish relatives?

The medium continues after this fashion until the meeting is concluded.

No greater frauds exist than platform test mediums. I know one who travels about and rents large opera houses. He has a regular troupe of men and women employed, who go ahead of him and with him, picking up information, which he uses at his performances. He also makes use of these people at his meetings. They are scattered through the audience and receive "wonderful tests." The only power this man has consists in

a good memory, a large amount of assurance, and a cast-iron conscience.

BALLOT TESTS.

Slate-writers and other mediums make use of this form of fraud, in order to get names and other information from their sitters.

The medium has on her table a small blank book, or small squares of soft blank paper, and a soft pencil that will make a broad, distinct mark. She requests her sitter to write some questions, or names of departed friends. A skeptic would, naturally, look upon this request with suspicion, and imagine that while he is writing the ballot the medium is in some manner watching him. This is not so, but the medium intends to read that ballot, all the same. Otherwise she would not want it written.

She waits until the ballot is folded and then proceeds to read it. How? There are several variations of the trick, and they are difficult to

describe in words. It requires much practice to become a successful ballot reader. I was obliged to take lessons for three months from a noted medium before I could do the trick. One form—that of changing the ballot on top of the table, right under the eyes of the sitter—I never could do in a satisfactory manner, but I knew how it is done. It is in this way :

The medium has a folded blank, which is to be used as a dummy. The sitter writes his ballot, folds it, and places it on the table, keeping his eyes on it. The medium touches it with her fingers—just to get some “magnetism”—does some “business” to detract the attention of the sitter, picks up the ballot to hold to the forehead and makes the change. It is the blank which goes to the forehead, while the written ballot goes into her lap, where it is opened with her right hand, read, folded, and the change again made as she places the dummy on the table.

This is the most difficult of all forms of ballot reading, and, consequently, few practice it. Here is another method, much used by a noted materializing medium :

This medium has on her table a saucer, or

dish of some kind, and matches. She requests her sitter to write three ballots, putting on all the names of those departed ones of whom she desires to ask questions. She directs the sitter to fold these in a certain manner, takes them in her hand, makes the change, and substitutes three blanks, which she places in the dish and proceeds to burn. The real ballots are safe in her lap, and she reads them at her best convenience.

Another way is to put the ballot on a double slate and pass it under the table, placing the left hand on the table with the sitter. Then drop the slate on the lap, take out the ballot and read it. I have read thousands of ballots in this manner, and was never caught or accused of fraud. One soon learns to open and fold a piece of soft paper so deftly and quietly that it is almost impossible to detect the trick.

In this manner mediums obtain many tests, all of which are carefully copied into a book and used for future reference, or to give to any new medium who comes to town.

Slate-writers and materializing mediums have no easy job. Their work is exacting and requires eternal vigilance. It is the trance and platform

mediums who have a good, easy time, as they depend entirely on the others referred to for their tests.

MATERIALIZED PENCIL OR FINGER.

This is a simple trick, depending chiefly on the credulity of the sitter.

The medium waves a finger in the air, claiming that a pencil is growing out of the end of it. The other hand, containing some small pieces of slate pencil, is kept tightly closed in the lap. Suddenly, the hand that is held aloft is slapped down, and a piece of pencil deftly picked up with the finger-nail. The sitter is supposed to believe that the pencil has grown out of the finger.

Harry Powell originated this trick in the East, and made much money by it. It is being practiced now by a Los Angeles medium, to whom Powell showed it.

MAGNETIZED SLATES.

A medium in San Francisco has made a small fortune by means of this humbug. He sells "magnetized slates" for \$5 a pair. They cost him about three cents each. He has the business down to a system, and works his victims in this manner :

A printed circular is sent out, describing the wonderful merits of his magnetized slates, together with a letter from the medium, stating that his guides have informed him that the person he is writing to could become a wonderful slate-writing medium if they would purchase a pair of these slates, which are safely packed and sent on receipt of \$5.

These slates are scattered all over the country. The man counts his silly dupes by the thousands.

MATERIALIZING.

This is the chief of all the mediumistic frauds which I am describing. It gives more opportunities for deceit than any other physical phase.

It certainly does seem strange that any man or woman with ordinary reasoning powers and common sense should believe in the supernatural character of such silly tricks. The dark room cabinet and "conditions" which the medium demands should be sufficient evidence of fraud. People, however, are so anxious to be humbugged that they crowd these darkened rooms, kiss and caress the medium, or a confederate, and then go away declaring that they have seen and talked with their dear departed friends.

As long as there are fools in the world, there will be rogues to prey upon them.

The illumination, so much used by mediums for "spirit robes," is obtained from W. D. Devoe, corner of William and Fulton streets, New York. It costs \$2.25 a pound, comes in cans, and is simply illuminated paint. The garments are made of

the variety of gauze known as tarleton, all starch being washed out. The paint is applied with a camel's hair brush, after any desired pattern. The tarleton is then pinned to a wall, or hung where the light and air strikes it, but not the sun. It dries quickly.

About an hour before a seance, these illuminated garments are again hung in the light and air, as they will not "show up" unless thus exposed to light. There is a peculiar, musty, graveyard smell about the garments, arising from the phosphorescent paint. This odor pleases the believers, who always cry out joyfully as soon as they perceive it: "Here they come! Just smell them!" "They" and "them" are supposed to be the deceased relatives of these silly people.

It is much easier to give a seance with illumination, which is done in a very dark room, than to give what is termed a "light seance," although a light seance is so dark that one cannot see a foot ahead.

A false wig and beard, a pair of sandal slippers, with extra bottoms, to increase the medium's height, a few yards of tarleton, and a dark room, there you have all the prerequisites for a fine seance. Imagination, and a desire on the part of

those present to be humbugged, does the rest.

The audience believes that as soon as the medium goes behind the curtain she is entranced by her spirit guide. This, of course, is all humbug. Never in her life is she more awake or less busy than at that time.

First, while a song is being sung, she removes her shoes and dress, and gets the "spook clothes" from their hiding place. Then comes active work. She may have two, or half a dozen confederates, to help, but the heaviest work falls on the medium. In perfectly dark seances, where illumination alone is used, a confederate sits in the circle nearest the cabinet, and is always the loudest in demanding conditions, appearing to be very skeptical, so much so that the objector is allowed to sit next to the cabinet, "just to convince himself," but, in reality, to slip into the cabinet at certain signals, be covered with a piece of illuminated gauze, and show himself with the medium at the aperture to the admiring and wondering audience. This makes a remarkably effective test.

While giving materializing seances I had someone to "spook" for me out of the circle, except on rare occasions, when I had a confederate enter from an adjoining room.

When the medium goes to a private house where she has no chance to work the confederate dodge, she carries, concealed on her person, a "dummy." This is made of a soft piece of muslin, gored at the top, so as to be much smaller there than at the bottom. It has three tucks—one at the bottom, one in the center, and one in the top—through which soft bonnet wire is run. It is about three feet long, sewed up like a skirt, and will fold up. Covered with soft white drapery, or illuminator, and held out on the mediums hand, this makes a very respectable sort of spook, as seen in the dim light, or in total darkness.

A celebrated medium told me that, at the first materializing seance she gave, all the spook's clothes she had consisted of one pillow slip. The lady at whose house she was stopping watched her so closely that she was unable to get hold of anything else. With this slip she made up as a grandmother, wearing a big old-fashioned cap, and was "recognized."

This same medium is one of the greatest living fakirs. She has been exposed and arrested, her spook clothes put on exhibition, and long articles printed in the papers telling the public what

an outrageous fraud she is. Yet, the Spiritualists uphold her, and she continues to humbug the people. She makes much money by it, and as she grows older she grows more hardened. Five years ago I was sitting in her seance room alone with her. She had been showing me some new "spirit robes" which she had been making, and was giving me a graphic description of the many different ways in which she could fool people, when she suddenly paused; her eyes filled with tears, and she said: "Oh! what an awful sin it all is! I wonder whether I will go to hell for practicing it!"

Mediums!—I know that this thought has come to all of you, at some time. It came to me, and remained with me until I was brought back to God, and gave up the sin of mediumship. It is no wonder, when one considers the character of their occupation, that mediums have trouble, and are among the most unhappy people on earth.

I will mention one more incident, to show the facility with which people can be fooled at these seances.

A noted slate-writer was doing a rushing business at Chicago. Mr. Jones, then editor of the

Religio-Philosophical Journal, made up his mind that a medium who was such a fine slate-writer could certainly materialize, and insisted on the medium sitting in a cabinet, which he had in one of his private rooms. This cabinet had been made after a special design of Mr. Jones, and he was sure there were no "traps" or tricks about it. I will tell the story in the medium's own words:

"When Mr. Jones insisted on my going into that cabinet I really did not know what to do. I had all the tricks of slate-writing at my fingers' ends and could have fooled him in that line for an indefinite time, but I had never taken any lessons in materializing, and had no spook clothes, beards or wigs with me. I knew, of course, all about it—that it is a fake, like other spirit business—but I was not doing it. I therefore made up my mind to go into that cabinet and then let my 'control' take hold of me and tell them that the conditions were not right for manifestations.

"There were about a dozen present as I took my seat in the cabinet, which was of wood, with a door that had an oval window in it and a small shelf attached for paper or slate, upon which the spirits were sometimes supposed to write. The

company sang a song and then I began to feel that I must do something in order that Mr. Jones should not be disappointed.

“ Having nothing with which to disguise my face, I dared not go to the window, as Jones insisted on having a better light than is usual at such meetings. At length a plan occurred to me. I removed one of my shoes and stockings, pinned a large white handkerchief around the foot, leaving the sole bare. I then leaned far back in the chair and put this sweet ‘ spirit face ’ at the window.

“ Instantly there was a cry: ‘ Oh, there is a face.’ Then came the query: ‘ Is it for me ? ’

“ To this query, coming from a good old sister in Spiritualism, and knowing how prone she was to accept any and everything claiming to be a spirit, I caused the spirit face to bow an affirmative.

“ ‘ Can I come up to the window ? ’

“ The spirit face again bowed, and the old lady came up, saying, in a tearful voice:

“ ‘ Manda, is that you ? ’

“ Again the foot bowed.

“ ‘ Will you let me kiss you ? ’

“ Once more there was an affirmative sign,

when the old lady leaned forward and gave my foot a sounding kiss. The foot immediately disappeared, and as she turned away, sobbing, she said:

“ ‘ I kno—know tha—that was Man—Manda ! ’

“ ‘ But how are you so sure of it, sister ? ’ enquired some one.

“ ‘ Why,’ replied she, still sobbing, ‘ we kept her poor de—dead body four da—days and *that* smelt just like it did.’

“ This ended the seance, my ‘ control ’ announcing that I could do no more. I thought that, if my foot smelt like a four days’ old corpse, I had better put my shoe on, and not play spook with it any longer.”

Mediums allow themselves to be searched and dressed all in black before going into the cabinet, but they would never agree to this, or any other condition, unless they had previously made arrangements with a confederate. It is usually the confederate who does the searching. No medium will allow herself to be placed where she has no chance. You may lock and seal the doors and search the medium, but if she agrees to abide by it, rest assured some one is going to help her and

carry into that room all she requires to make up with.

Not long ago a medium gave a test seance in San Diego. Having worked there for four years I was prepared to give her all the tests she needed. I also supplied her with illuminated garments and taught her slate-writing, so that she gave public exhibitions in Horton's Hall. She has since described to me the manner in which she fooled the people who came to the test seance.

Her husband assists her, and is always a ready confederate. A piece of wide-meshed wire was drawn across a corner of the room, in front of which was a thick curtain. The medium was dressed in black, "from the skin out," as she expressed it. Two or three ladies watched her dress, but they forgot to examine the black dress she put on. This dress, which was made to order, has a double lining. In it she carried all the "spook clothes" she needed.

She was placed behind the wire screen, which was fastened down with small screw eyes. As soon as it was dark, and the singing began, she undressed, got out her spook clothes, and then proceeded to extract enough of the screws to en-

able her to slip under the netting. The curtain hid her movements and she gave a successful seance, of course replacing everything before the lights were turned on.

This woman has a broad negro accent, having been raised in South Carolina, and all her spirits have the same accent when they talk. She can change her voice a little, but cannot get rid of this accent.

Some mediums, who live in their own homes, have their seance rooms full of trap doors and holes for confederates to get in and out of. I have known two who never left the cabinet, but allowed their confederates to do all the work.

Reader, did you ever hear of a spirit being caught at any of the many *exposes* which have taken place? No—it is always the medium, or her ally. Spiritualistic lecturers and writers have tried to gloss this glaring fraud over by declaring that “the forces are drawn out from the medium to make up the spirit form,” and that, if a light is too suddenly brought to bear, the spirit departs and the poor medium is left standing in the clutches of the grabber. This is all a humbug. The medium—or confederate—is all the spirit that ever comes out of a cabinet.

Never attempt to examine a medium. You will find nothing there. Look after the husband, or confederate, who carries the spook clothes.

DARK CIRCLES.

These differ somewhat from materialization. The medium sits in the center of the room, the people forming a ring or circle about her. I gave on an average, three of these circles a week for ten years, and should, therefore, know something about them.

Neither in dark circles nor in materialization did I ever have a light struck, nor was I ever grabbed or exposed. I think this is due to the fact that I never tried to rob people, as so many mediums do. I made a bare living for my family and behaved myself decently and respectably. In return, I was always treated as a lady.

My test at these circles was to have my hands filled with flour, the supposition being that, if I attempted to touch anyone, traces of the flour

would be left on their clothes. In two seconds after the light was extinguished I would have my right hand free, and would be slapping and touching all around the circle; would write on slates, held in the laps of those present, carry articles from one to another, and do many other things that were all attributed to spirit power.

When the lights were called for, both hands would be full of flour, and no trace of it on any of the black clothes of the sitters. The method of doing this is simple enough. I emptied the flour from my right hand to my left, ran my fingers through my hair, which cleaned them perfectly, and then went to work.

A celebrated dark circle medium once said to me: "Sometimes, when I am playing this fraud I am afraid that God will let me see a spirit, or have a manifestation. It would scare me half to death."

It is impossible to describe all the tricks practiced by dark circle and materializing mediums, because place and circumstances have much bearing on each performance, but I know this, and defy any medium to disprove it: It is all a trick. There never was a spook produced by any medium or a word written by a spook.

The first materializing medium I sat with and learned the tricks from was a celebrated one, living at Terra Haute, Indiana. This was twenty years ago. Since then she has moved to California, where, I believe, she gives an occasional seance to a select few. She made much money as a medium and many wondered why she gave up the business. Here is one reason :

She had been frequently exposed, but always came out all right, as Spiritualists are ready to excuse anything a medium does so long as she claims that it is spiritual. One night, however, while playing spook she came out to a young doctor, claiming to be his sister, or some other relative. He, wishing to prove whether she was mortal or spirit, thrust a surgeon's knife into her leg. She nearly died from the effects of the wound, and, in fear, gave up the business.

I know another medium, in Los Angeles, who received a cut in her back, about a year ago, while she was out of the cabinet as a spirit. It was a serious wound, and she was sick—"of heart disease," as she gave it out—for a considerable time.

In conclusion, I would once more repeat that every so-called spirit manifestation is a gross and

palpable fraud. The wonder is that otherwise sensible people can be imposed upon by such childish tricks. If this little book shall succeed in opening the eyes of the public to the true nature of this shameless imposition, it will have fulfilled its mission.