

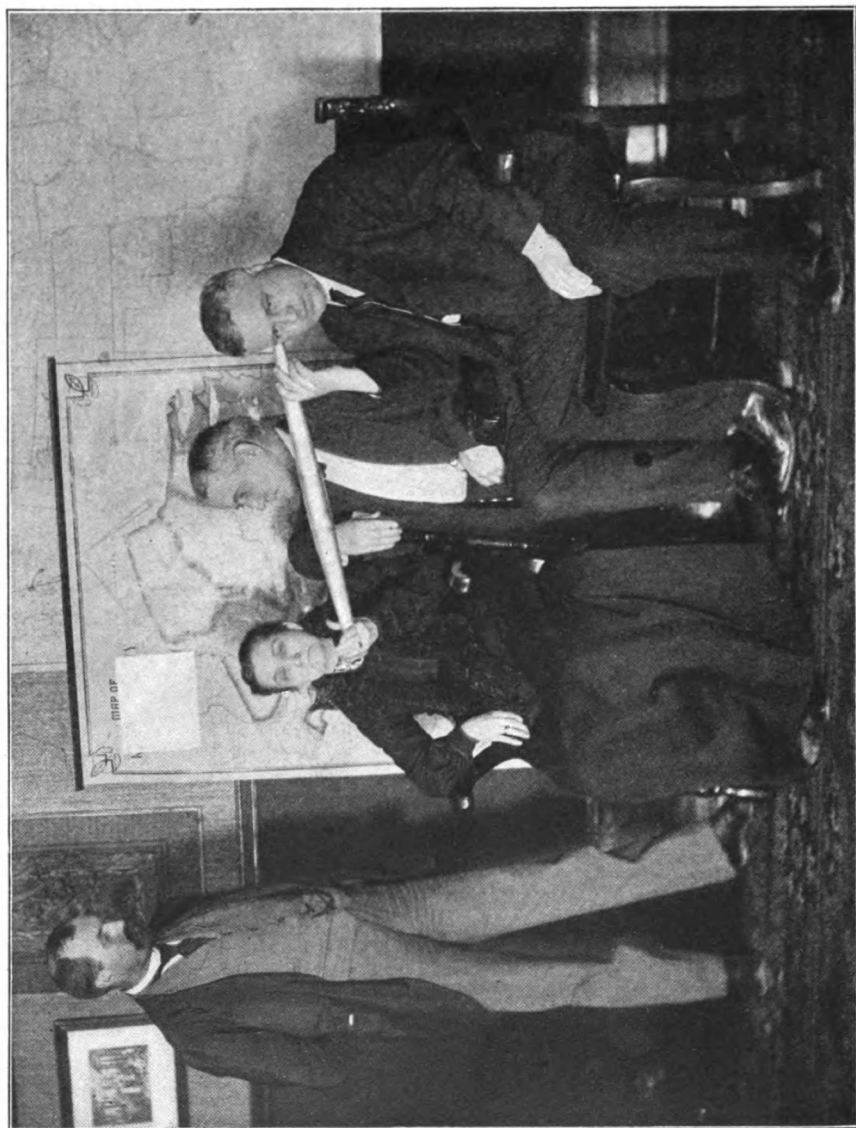
THE HISTORY
OF
A STRANGE CASE

BY
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A SEANCE WITH MRS. BLAKE.

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THE HISTORY OF A STRANGE CASE.

A STUDY IN OCCULTISM.

BY DAVID P. ABBOTT.

I.

IS spiritualism all deception and illusion? Is there no grain of truth to be found under the great mass of fraud and trickery with which a vast army of charlatans have disgraced it? Are the efforts of the Society for Psychical Research to prove fruitless? When all of the fraud and deception is cleared away, will nothing remain? These questions I have been asked time and again. What will the answer be?

Do no whisperings of hope from the great beyond ever echo down the infinite corridors of darkness? Will the pale vanished faces of our loved ones, that haunt the shadowy mists of memory, ever again stand before us in the bright sunlight of day? Will we ever again hear the dear voices that have long been stilled? Must we, with tottering steps supported only by blind faith, go down the hillside of life into the infinite darkness of the eternal valley? Is there no turning aside—no escape? Must we face the inevitable annihilation of the unity of self? When science lifts her torch and peers into the surrounding darkness, is there no gleam of hope to be seen? Will a new dawn ever break, with its countless songs of gladness bursting from the throats of the twittering love-birds of joy? Oh, beautiful Nature, how thy children adore thee! Oh, infinite Power, that animates and directs the great All, why this insatiable longing for immortality in the hearts of thy children!

I have been asked again and again, if, in all of my investigations, I have found nothing that I could not explain: if all has been perfectly simple and commonplace as soon as I witnessed it: if all of the mystery and romance disappear upon investigation. I have finally removed certain difficulties to publication, and shall now give to the

public an account of the most remarkable case that it has ever been my fortune to investigate. Among all the cases of my investigation, it stands unique and alone, entirely in a class by itself; still to a certain extent shrouded in mystery, with some features which I have not yet thoroughly explained satisfactorily to myself. The memory of this remarkable experience, and the weird and dramatic effect of what on the surface appeared to be the voices of the dead talking to me and exhibiting an intimate knowledge of my family history, will remain with me through life.

II.

On March 7, 1906, the carrier left at my door a letter that was destined to disturb my peace of mind, and to furnish me much material for thought for some time to come. Shortly before this I had published in *The Open Court* an article entitled, "Some Mediumistic Phenomena." I had vaguely wondered if this would not indirectly bring to my notice some accounts of strange phenomena from remote places in the world. Such was this missive.

This letter was written by a gentleman in New Haven, Connecticut; and in it he described a strange case that he had witnessed in a remote village one year before. The writer, Mr. E. A. Parsons, was unknown to me; but he introduced himself as a magician. He stated that having read my article and noted my knowledge of trickery, he desired to lay this case before me, in the hope that I might be able to explain it. I here quote from his letters:

"I will describe an experience which I had with an elderly lady in a little town in Ohio last year. She uses two tin horns or trumpets, each fourteen inches long, and two and one-half inches in diameter at the large ends, tapering to one inch at the smaller ends. The large end or bell of one horn is so made as to slip tightly into the large end of the other. On the smaller or outer ends of this double trumpet are soldered saucer-shaped pieces large enough to cover a person's ear. The trumpet is empty and can be examined by any one.

"Her *very marvelous power* is this: The sitter takes one end of this trumpet and places it to his ear, while the lady does the same with the other end, placing it to her ear. At once the sitter plainly hears whispers in the trumpet. These purport to be the voices of the spirits of his dead friends and relatives. They reply to any questions which he speaks out loud. During this time the lady's mouth and lips are tightly closed, and she makes no motions of the

throat or lips. She will, instead of holding the trumpet to her ear, hold her palm against it; or allow him to place one end of it against her back. She will, if preferred, permit two spectators to each hold an end, she merely touching the center with her fingers. In either event one hears the whispering just the same. Now this is done in broad daylight, anywhere, even out of doors. I investigated this phenomenon seven hours altogether, giving it every possible test, but could obtain no clue to it. I found that it was not ventriloquism, as the voices were really in the trumpet; besides, ventriloquists can not speak in whispers. I proved beyond question (as have many others) that the voices were really in the trumpet.

"The information which I received from the whispers was correct in every case. I had never seen the lady before, nor had I been in Ohio previously. Now the production of intelligent language inside this trumpet in daylight, three or four feet away from the medium, I regard as more wonderful than anything I have ever known. I now have the trumpet, having purchased it. Can you tell me how the whispered words were produced?"

In a subsequent letter he said: "The description I gave you was not overdrawn in any way. The lady is the wife of an humble farmer and resides in an obscure country village. She has resided there all of her life and has reared a large family of children. She has never been over twenty miles from her home and has but little education. She is, however, very intelligent. She gave her sittings for a long time free of charge, and later began charging ten cents. She now charges one dollar, but does not insist on anything.

"She can use a glass lamp chimney or any closed receptacle in place of the trumpet; and I have heard the voices just as plainly coming out of the sound hole of a guitar that lay upon the table. The guitar has also played in my presence, independently, but faintly. There was no music box in it, as is generally the case. She has also caused music to sound in the trumpet, and raps to sound on the outside of it.

"Three of my most intimate friends have seen her several times. Two of them were with me at my investigation. I have known of this lady for six years; and finally, having heard so much about her, I journeyed six hundred miles to see her in January, 1905. The lady was at many times talking with persons in the room at the same time that I was listening to the voices. I noted this with great care. Sometimes two different voices would whisper at the same time, as if one were trying to get ahead of the other.

"Of course we know how mediums usually gather information, but this lady had no means of knowing anything about me; and yet

the voices told me, correctly, many things of my own private life. Among those who talked with me were my mother, my daughter (dead twenty-two years), and my grandfather. My daughter told me where I lived, what kind of a house I lived in, what her living brother was doing, where she was buried, etc. An old music teacher of mine, of whom I had not thought for ten years, announced himself and said that he would like to play for me. Then I actually heard faint but distinct sounds of piano-playing in the trumpet, and my friends in the room also heard it. The sounds were like they would be if one were listening to a piano over a telephone. My father and my father-in-law spoke to me; as did also an uncle of whom I had no knowledge, but whose existence I afterwards verified. My mother gave her own name completely, but failed to give my middle name. She gave it as 'Albert,' when in reality it is 'Augustus.'

"At one time I heard an open voice in the trumpet for a moment. I also listened at her mouth and throat when voices were speaking, but could detect no sounds. I found the positions of the voices in the trumpet would vary, sounding at one time nearer to one end, and at another nearer to the other end. I had noticed the varying strength of the voices, and the lady told me of this change of position. I verified it by listening outside the trumpet when others held it, and found the voices to vary one foot and a half in location. *I was particularly impressed with the openness of the lady, and with her perfect willingness for me to test her powers in any manner that I desired. She afforded me every opportunity to make such tests, giving me seven or eight hours of her time.* I suppose this thing to be a trick; but with over forty years study of magic, and with the acquaintance of all the great magicians, I was entirely unable to even surmise how it could be done. It is either a trick or it is the work of His Satanic Majesty.

"Now I believe I have discovered a medium as good as Home, and I hesitate about making public her name and address. You understand, any medium possessing this secret would think his fortune made. I am no medium, but I certainly want the secret. If this prove to be a trick, I do not want its secret given to the world, but desire to keep it for private use. If you see fit to sign a contract binding yourself to respect this desire, and not to reveal the secret of the performance without my consent, I will be pleased to furnish you the name and address of the lady. I shall expect you to give me the fullest results of any investigations which you may make."

On receipt of this letter I immediately signed and returned the required agreement to Mr. Parsons. I received in return the coveted information. Being now at liberty to reveal all of the details, I shall state that the lady is Mrs. Elizabeth Blake, of Braderick, Ohio. This is a little village of a few houses, on the banks of the Ohio, just across the river, north, from Huntington, West Virginia. The place is reached from Huntington, most directly, by a row-boat ferry.

After receiving this information, I decided to try to learn from other sources if the case were really as described by Mr. Parsons. About this time I learned that the latter gentleman is well known in the world of magic under the nom de plume of "Henry Hardin," and that he is a dealer in magician's secrets. Had I received this account from other sources. I should have given it but little credence, inasmuch as I have investigated so many other cases, and have invariably found nothing but trickery. But here was a strange report from a man versed in the arts of trickery; an expert himself, and one not easily deceived. Surely, this, at least, warranted investigation.

I had always been very skeptical, never believing in spirit communion, telepathy, clairvoyance, or anything of the kind; and as to physical phenomena, I had found everything very commonplace and devoid of mystery when I had an opportunity to see it myself. I could not help wondering and pondering; and asking myself if, after all, it were possible for a being to exist on this earth with any powers out of the ordinary; or with any faculty not common to the rest of the race. Decidedly, I could not believe such a thing possible, and yet, how could an expert magician be deceived with such a thing? I felt greatly puzzled; and although I had no faith in spirit communion, decided to investigate further.

I wrote a letter to the professor of science in the schools at Huntington, telling him that I knew of a strange case of psychic phenomena in his vicinity, and proposing to engage him to investigate it for me. I was a member of the Society for Psychical Research and I offered to furnish him with proper credentials, etc. I enclosed a stamped envelope, but he did not even condescend to reply. Next, I wrote directly to Mrs. Blake, and invited her to visit my home. I told her I was a business man of Omaha, and offered to furnish references as to my standing. I also offered to defray all expenses of her journey.

Mrs. Blake did not reply in person; but I received a letter from a gentleman of very high standing, whom I shall call Dr. X—, as he does not desire me to use his name. This gentleman hap-

pened to be her physician. He informed me that Mrs. Blake had fallen from her chair at some previous time, rupturing the ligaments of her ankle; that this had resulted in blood poisoning and had left her crippled; that since that time she was compelled to go about on crutches; that inaction frequently resulted in attacks of acute indigestion; and that she was thus in such a state of health as to prevent her making any journey. He thanked me in her name for the invitation.

Now, this gentleman seemed to be accommodating; so I took the liberty of again writing him, asking for a report from him on the powers of his patient; for his own opinion of the case, etc. This he kindly gave me; and this was followed by several letters, going into great detail of what he considered the most important case in the world.

His report corroborated all that Mr. Parsons had written me; but I noticed that he attached greater importance to the information given by the voices, than he did to the phenomenon of the voices themselves. This was just the reverse of the estimate of the case formed by Mr. Parsons, for the latter regarded the phenomenon of the voices as the greater mystery.

Dr. X— stated that at his first sitting he was completely “taken off his feet, so to speak,” and considered spirit communion as proven; but that upon subsequent occasions, he was sorry to state things had occurred to lessen this belief. He related many marvelous incidents of conversation with the voices, and stated that he had taken many friends to the lady under assumed names; *yet he had never failed to hear the voices call these persons by their right names, etc.* He also stated that the information furnished by Mrs. Blake’s voices at times had seemed so marvelous that he had seriously contemplated referring her case to the Society for Psychological Research, in order that he might have an authoritative statement with regard to what her powers really consisted of. I quote a few extracts from many in his letters:

“Twenty-two years ago this summer, my father took me to Virginia for the purpose of entering me in college. I was an only child, had not been away from home a great deal, and was quite young; therefore he accompanied me to Blacksburg, Virginia, introduced me to the president of the school, and otherwise assisted me in getting started. It was a military school, and every new-comer was called a ‘rat,’ and this was yelled at him by the older students in chorus until it grated upon his nerves to a considerable extent.

“As my father and myself walked up towards the college

buildings over the broad campus, the word 'rat' was yelled at us with depressing distinctness. We went across the campus and on beyond to a large grove of virgin forest, where we sat down upon a large log; and here my father gave me some paternal advice. He was going to leave the next morning and I felt very sad and lonely; and it was with great difficulty that I kept back the tears that in spite of myself would now and then trickle down my cheeks. At all of this my father laughed and said that I would be all right in a few days.

"When conversing through Mrs. Blake's trumpet with the supposed voice of my father, the following conversation with the voice occurred. I had previously written out the questions and I have since added the answers of the voice:

"'Do you remember the time you took me off to college?' I asked.

"'Yes, as distinctly as if it had been yesterday,' the voice replied.

"'When we walked towards the buildings, what was said to me by some of the students?'

"'They yelled "Rat" at you.'

"'Spell that word,' I requested, as I desired no misunderstanding.

"'R—a—t,' spelled the voice.

"'Where did we go after leaving the campus and college buildings?' I next asked.

"'We went to a large grove near the college buildings and sat down upon a hickory log,' responded the voice.

"'What did I do and say while sitting on this log?'

"'You cried because I was going to leave you and go home,' answered the voice. All of this was wonderfully accurate, but I do not know whether or not the log was hickory."

In another letter he says: "On one occasion a voice supposed to be my grandfather's talked with me, and I asked it what had caused him to depart this life. Just previous to asking this question the voice had been full and strong; but upon asking it the voice became indistinct, and I concluded that my question had 'put the lady out of business.' To my surprise, in a few minutes my grandfather commenced to talk again; and I reminded him that he had not answered my question. He replied by saying that I knew perfectly well what had caused him to depart this life, and that it was not necessary to ask such unimportant questions.

"I replied by stating that I wanted the question answered, in

order that I might be convinced as to his identity ; and also to know that he had sufficient consciousness and intelligence to reply. He then stated that the immediate cause of his death was a fracture of the skull.

“ ‘How did this happen?’ I asked.

“ ‘By falling down a stairway,’ answered the voice.

“ ‘In what town and house did this occur?’

“ ‘In Gallipolis, Ohio, in my son’s home,’ again responded the voice. All of this was correct.

“I next asked my grandfather’s voice if he remembered what he used to entertain me with when I was a child. He replied that he did ; and that he had made little boats for me, and had floated them in a tub of water. I asked how old I was when this took place, and he replied that I was five years old. This was correct, and had occurred some thirty-four years ago.”

Again Dr. X— says, “In addition to her daylight work, Mrs. Blake gives dark seances. At these, the voice of her dead son Abe usually opens the meeting with prayer, and some hymns are sung by all present. During this time, numerous little blue lights flit about the room ; the guitar is frequently floated over our heads, etc. After this, voices speak up in various parts of the room and address those present. I attended one of those night meetings recently.

“In addition to others present, I took with me Clara Mathers Bee, who had formerly been my stenographer, but whom I had not seen for five years. She was a total stranger to the others present, and resides at a remote point in the interior of the state. Mrs. Blake does not keep in touch with the whole state of West Virginia, and knew nothing of this lady.

“Mrs. Bee had recently lost a young lady cousin, and was very anxious to communicate with her. She even went so far in her inexperience as to call for this relative on several occasions, giving her name in full. This, however, brought no results, although Mrs. Blake could have made use of the knowledge thus acquired. Finally, during an attempt to communicate with this relative, a child’s voice spoke and said, ‘I want to talk to my Aunty Clara.’ It was some time before any one answered and no one seemed to understand for whom this was intended. Presently Mrs. Bee said, ‘Do you want to talk to me?’

“ ‘Yes, you are my Aunty Clara,’ the voice replied.

“ ‘What is your name?’ asked Mrs. Bee.

“ ‘My name is Stinson Bee,’ answered the voice.

“‘How long has it been since you died?’

“‘Six months.’

“‘What caused you to leave this life?’

“‘I was burned to death; and I want you to tell my papa that I want to talk to him,’ responded the voice.

“In explanation I will state that Stinson Bee, who was a nephew of Mrs. Bee’s husband, was burned to death six months before the time of this sitting. Mrs. Blake could not have known anything of this, as it happened in a remote part of the interior of the state; and as intimate as I am with the family, I did not know of it.

“Just at this point my father’s voice broke into the conversation and said, ‘How do you do, Clara?’

“‘Do you know who this is that you are talking to?’ I asked.

“‘Yes, it is Clara Bee,’ responded the voice.

“‘That is correct, but what was her name before she was married?’ I asked.

“‘Don’t you think I know Clara Mathers?’ the voice replied.”

These are but few of many incidents which Dr. X— has related to me in great seriousness. He is a well educated and highly respected gentleman, of the highest standing in his community. There are reasons why he does not desire his name used, and this is why I omit the name; but it can be had in private. In one letter he informed me that during the daylight sittings, Mrs. Blake first seats herself beside the sitter, each allowing the trumpet to rest with its ends in their adjacent palms. Soon the trumpet begins to grow heavy, and then finally, one end of it seems to attempt to move upward to the ear of the sitter. This means that conditions are right and that a voice desires to speak.

He further stated that close friends of Mrs. Blake who were in a position to know, informed him that of late Mrs. Blake was rapidly losing her powers; and that they were not nearly what they had previously been. He suggested, in case I contemplated an investigation that I make it as quickly as possible, for he said that her health was such that any sudden attack was liable to terminate her earthly career. He also suggested that I write nothing further to Mrs. Blake, and in no way let her know that I contemplated making such an extended journey to see her; as he had found results much better when she did not think she was being especially investigated. He thought I should simply act as if I had been passing and had merely stopped off on my journey.

After receiving these reports, I determined to investigate this case if possible. I wrote to Prof. James H. Hyslop, Secretary of

the American Society for Psychical Research, and detailed the case to him, asking if he would assist me. Meanwhile I wrote Mr. Parsons, and secured his permission to lay the matter before Professor Hyslop. I did not tell the latter the name or location of the lady but explained that it was within one hundred miles of Cincinnati. Also, I wrote to Dr. X— that I would like to be informed if Mrs. Blake were at home and well, as I wished to come. He replied, informing me that she was at that time visiting in the mountains; but that immediately upon her return, he would notify me. This he did; but she was suddenly taken sick on her return, and this prevented my making the journey. Dr. X—, however, stated that he would instantly inform me on the recovery of Mrs. Blake's strength, as soon as such should enable her to give sittings. He again urged me not to delay, if I desired results of value, stating that undoubtedly her powers would soon be gone.

Meanwhile, Professor Hyslop met a lady from that section of the country, who told him of "a wonderful medium, a Mrs. Blake near Huntington, West Virginia." Professor Hyslop then wrote me that he thought he had discovered the identity of the lady, and asked me if this were she. I wrote in reply that it was. I mailed the letter from Omaha to Professor Hyslop, who was then in New York at Hurricane Lodge on the Hudson. In just two days after mailing the letter, I received a telegram from Professor Hyslop, saying, "I start for Huntington to-night."

Now, I did not desire any one to arrive on the scene ahead of myself; for I wanted to thoroughly satisfy my own curiosity. I therefore immediately telegraphed Dr. X— at Huntington as follows, "Professor Hyslop wires his starting. Shall I come?" In an hour I received this reply, "Just as well now as any time." During the wait I called up by telephone, my cousin Geo. W. Clawson of Kansas City, Mo., to whom I had previously described the case, and induced him to accompany me. So far I had not revealed to him where we were going, except that it was beyond Cincinnati. Mr. Clawson had a short time before lost a daughter whose Christian name was Georgia Chastine, and was very greatly grieved over her demise. It was the hope of obtaining some proof of a future life through communication with her that caused him to yield and to go with me.

The next morning I took the train for Kansas City, where I was joined by Mr. Clawson; and we started on our one-thousand-mile journey. I asked Mr. Clawson to choose a name to travel under, and to keep his real name secret, as I wanted no possibility

of deception in my investigation. The name he chose was "C. E. Wilson," that of a friend of his. He made the journey under this name and registered under it at the Florentine Hotel.

I had resided for a few years in Omaha, but was not generally known there. My parents reside at the village of Falls City, Neb., and are well known there. I knew that, should my friend Dr. X— desire to do so, it would be possible for him to employ some one in advance to obtain information in regard to my relatives and family. *I regarded him with far too much respect to think such a thing would happen*; but in order to *remove all possibility of fraud*, I desired to take with me an unknown person under an assumed name. This was why I decided on Mr. Clawson. I did not reveal my intention to any one.

I had previously written to Dr. X— that I was liable to bring an unknown person with me, but I gave him no idea of who this person would be. I did not think that any one would be able to reach out through space one thousand miles and read my mind, discover whom I intended taking, and then look up his history in advance. I considered Mr. Clawson a desirable person to go with me, as both of his parents were dead; and also on account of his great desire to communicate with his dead daughter, if such a thing were possible. He also had a brother by the name of "Edward," who had died when quite young, and a son who had died within a few days of birth. However, these last two instances I did not know until after our sittings. The reader should remember these facts and names, on account of what is to follow. I did not expect results of much consequence myself, owing to the fact that I have no immediate dead, with the exception of two baby brothers, my grandparents and some uncles and aunts. I therefore could not expect to receive results of much importance, whatever the power of the lady might be. We journeyed continuously for two nights and a day, arriving at Huntington in the early morning hours of Monday, July 23, 1906.

III.

About eight o'clock that morning I telephoned to Dr. X— that I had arrived with a friend. The Doctor resided in a beautiful park a short distance in the country. He soon arrived at our hotel with his carriage; and I introduced my friend, Mr. C. E. Wilson (Mr. Clawson, under his assumed name), to him. The Doctor then drove us to his residence for a short time. He showed us a copy of a letter to Mrs. Blake which he had dictated a few days before, and which stated that he expected two friends from New York to visit

him; and that he wished to take them to see her, and he hoped she would receive them and do the best she could, even if not entirely recovered from her recent illness. He did not give any names in his letter; and he assured me that, since the time of answering my letter to Mrs. Blake at the beginning of our correspondence, he had never mentioned my name to her.

To the Doctor himself, I was a total stranger, with the exception of what he had learned of me in my letters to him, and also what information he had gleaned from my article, "Some Mediumistic Phenomena," before referred to. The Doctor had in his possession one of Mrs. Blake's double trumpets. We examined this thoroughly; and taking it we drove to the Ohio River, and crossed in a row-boat to Braderick, Ohio. This village consists of about one dozen cottages situated along the river bank. It was about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and Professor Hyslop had not yet arrived, the night boat on which he journeyed down the Hudson having been delayed. We went up the bank and turned to the left to Mrs. Blake's cottage. The ferry landing is close to her house, and most of its patronage seems to come from her visitors.

Mr. Blake was sitting on the porch and he received us. He informed us that he had just turned away a number of persons who desired sittings with Mrs. Blake, and that she could not receive us professionally. However, we were not to be dismissed in this manner, and we refused to leave without at least seeing her. Mr. Blake then told us we might enter, while he remained outside to turn away visitors. We entered the little parlor; and Dr. X—stepped through the open doorway and spoke to Mrs. Blake, telling her he had his two friends with him whom he wished to bring in. She readily consented and we entered.

She was sitting in a large rocker by the window in her little room. Her crutches were by her side, and she seemed a very pleasing, though elderly and frail lady. We were introduced merely as "friends," and we conversed with her for a few moments. She said she was born and had resided all of her life within two and one-half miles of her present home. She explained that she had possessed her power since a child. She said that as a little girl she had heard voices in her ears, and that some gentleman had experimented with her. He found that a closed receptacle confined the sounds and made the words clearer. After this, the present trumpet had been devised, but she could use any closed receptacle. She said that since her sickness, she had *lost her power*, so that she could "get nothing satisfactory any more." She said that her

power was declining so rapidly that she felt she would have to give up the business entirely. She expressed her willingness to try, but stated that she could not satisfy any one now like she used to do when her health was better. Meanwhile, her husband kept coming in and going out, as if he were watching her closely to prevent her giving a sitting. She, herself, seemed very accommodating; and I felt assured that, but for him, we could conduct some interesting experiments. Finally Dr. X— went out and talked to him, and succeeded in securing his consent for a short trial.

Mr. Clawson now seated himself beside the lady, and she instructed him to take one end of the trumpet in his palm, while she did the same with the other end.

In a moment Mr. Clawson remarked, "How heavy that is getting!" and as he did so, I thought I heard a faint whisper in the end of the trumpet that Mr. Clawson was holding. It was, however, so faint that I could not be certain of it. It was more like a single syllable, the drawing of a breath, or like a hissing sound, but it was very indistinct. In a moment the trumpet began to rise toward Mr. Clawson's ear, and the lady said, "Some one wants to speak to you, sir; place the trumpet to your ear." He did so, and she placed the other end to her ear.

Whispered voices in the trumpet now began to address Mr. Clawson, but from the outside I could not understand what was said. Mr. Clawson seemed unable to do much better, and it appeared that the sitting would prove a failure on this account. Mrs. Blake now spoke and said, "Please try and speak plainly, dear friend, so that the gentleman can understand you." The voice now seemed to become more distinct, and Mr. Clawson asked the question, "Who are you?" He did not appear to understand the reply; for he repeated his question a few times, as one does at a poorly-working telephone. Finally I heard him say, "You say you are my brother Eddie?" Mr. Clawson seemed confused at being unable to understand the many whispered words in the spoken sentences; and turning to me, he said, "You take the trumpet and see if you can understand any better."

I may here remark that up to this time I did not know that Mr. Clawson had a dead brother "Edward," and that I supposed this to be an error until afterwards. During the time that the voices were speaking, Mrs. Blake's lips were tightly closed, and there was no motion of them. She appeared to be listening intently to the voices, and trying to follow the conversation.

I now took the trumpet. A voice spoke a lengthy sentence or

more, which was so inarticulate that I could not understand it. Finally I heard the words, "Can't you hear me?"

"Yes. Who are you?" I replied.

"I am your brother and I want to talk to mother. Tell her. . . .," responded the voice, the last words becoming indistinct.

"What shall I tell her?" I asked. The voice then took the tone of a child's voice, low, and almost vocal, and said, "Tell her that I love her."

The only dead brother that I have, who was old enough to talk before his death, was named "Thomas." He was two years older than I, and three years old at death. I now said, "Give me your name." The voice then repeated an inarticulate name many times, but I could not understand it. It appeared to sound like "Artie" or "Arthur." In fact it sounded first like one, and then like the other would sound, were I to try to whisper them in an inarticulate manner. I did not repeat these names, and the voice gave up the attempt. I now handed the trumpet to Mr. Clawson, and the voice kept repeating, "I want to talk to my brother," so he gave the trumpet back to me.

"Whom do you want to talk to?" I asked.

"I want to talk to my brother Davie—brother Davie Abbott," responded the voice. I could hear the name "Abbott" repeated several times after this, and then the voice finally ceased.

Mr. Clawson now took the trumpet. I may remark that although Mr. Clawson's parents, and also a little son who was never named, were dead, his whole heart was set on obtaining a communication from his daughter Georgia, who had recently died; and unless he could do this, the whole sitting was a failure as far as he was concerned. This daughter had been very affectionate, and had always called her mother by the pet names of "Muz" and "Muzzie." She also generally called her father "Daddie," in a playful way. She had recently graduated from a school of dramatic art, and while there had become affianced to a young gentleman whose Christian name is "Archimedes." He is usually called "Ark" for short. Mr. Clawson had these facts in mind, intending to use them as a matter of identification.

A voice now addressed Mr. Clawson, saying, "I am your brother."

"Who else is there? Any of my relatives?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Your mother is here," responded the voice.

"Who else is there?"

"Your baby."

"Let the baby speak and give its name," requested Mr. Clawson.

This was followed by many indistinct words that could not be understood. Finally a name was pronounced that Mr. Clawson understood to be "Edna." He had no child of that name; but in what followed, although his lips addressed the name "Edna," his whole mind addressed his daughter, "Georgia."

"Edna, if you are my daughter, tell me what was your pet name for me?" he asked.

"I called you Daddie," the voice replied.

"What was your pet name for your mother?"

"I called her Muz, and sometimes Muzzie," responded the voice.

"What is my name?" asked Mr. Clawson, but the reply was so indistinct that it could not be understood.

I now took the trumpet, but received nothing satisfactory—merely inarticulate words. Soon I was quite sure that I heard a voice announcing, "This is Grandma Daily." My grandmother on my mother's side was Mrs. Daily; but as she had always called me "Davie" as a child, and as the names "Daily" and "Davie," when whispered, sound very similar, I decided that possibly the voice had whispered, "This is Grandma, Davie." I did not wish to misinterpret sounds and thus aid the lady, and I desired to be very certain of all of my tests; so I did not repeat the name "Daily," as most persons would have done. I waited, expecting the voice to pronounce the name unmistakably.

A number of inarticulate sentences which I could not understand were now spoken. However, among the words I heard first the name "Harvey," and then "Dave." After this I heard the name "Dave Harvey." Next, I heard the initials "J. A.," and I also heard a name that seemed to be "Asa." I have an uncle who is dead, and whose name was "Richard Harvey." The name of his son who is now living is "David Harvey." An uncle of mine who is dead was called by the name of "Asa," but his name had been given in my article referred to before. I have a living brother whose initials are "J. A."

Mr. Clawson now took the trumpet and attempted to talk to some inarticulate voices. Finally a voice said, "I am Grandma."

"Grandma who?" asked Mr. Clawson. I could not understand the reply; but I heard Mr. Clawson repeat, "Grandma Daily?" with a rising inflection. He then turned to me and said, "That is pretty good. The voice says that Grandma Daily is here."

At this point Mrs. Blake terminated the sitting, claiming that her strength was leaving her. It had lasted probably twenty minutes. At one time Mrs. Blake had turned her back to me so as to use her other ear. At this time her face was next to the wall, and I could not see her lips; but I thought I detected a twitching of the muscles of the throat. The sounds were really in the trumpet, and there was no doubt that they did not issue from the nose or mouth of Mrs. Blake.

A few times during the sitting she took the trumpet from her ear, allowing it to rest in her palm. This would be for an instant at a time. During such time there was no cessation of the voices in the trumpet; but the fingers of her hand that were over the end of it seemed to be separated. At such times the voices seemed to originate at her hand, and were not so distinct as usual. When the trumpet was at her ear they seemed to originate there.

After the sitting, we told Mrs. Blake that we had a friend who would arrive on the next train. We stated that we very earnestly desired him to meet her, and finally she agreed that we should bring him and return in the evening. Then we presented her with a neat sum (as we desired her best services), and took our departure.

We crossed the river, returned to the home of our friend Dr. X—, and then sent a driver to the train to see if Prof. Hyslop would arrive. Mr. Clawson went with the Doctor's driver to the train. In a short time they returned, bringing Professor Hyslop with them. Immediately after noon we dictated to the Doctor's stenographer a concise account of our morning sitting. It is from these records made at the time that this account is taken. Each of us dictated separately all that he could remember. We then compared our reports and corrected them.

A little later in the afternoon, we drove to the river again and crossed to Mrs. Blake's cottage. We were received, and had quite an interesting conversation with her. During this time Professor Hyslop questioned her minutely about the history of her case. We desired a sitting, but she declined to give us both a daylight and a dark seance; so we waited a few moments, as it was rapidly growing dark; and we then had a dark sitting, intending to have a daylight sitting the following day if possible. Mrs. Blake agreed to this, and said if her strength did not fail her, she would give us a sitting the following morning.

It now became quite dark, and we arranged ourselves around a small table. We were conversing at the time; and having my mind intently on her work, I thoughtlessly said to Mr. Clawson, "Mr.

Cla—, take this seat.” The others were talking at the time, I was not speaking loudly, and I discovered my error in time to omit the last syllable. I was quite sure that it was not noticed at the time, but this fact must be remembered.

Mrs. Blake sat on my left, and Professor Hyslop sat on her left. At the opposite end of the table sat Dr. X— and his brother-in-law who had just happened to come in. Mr. Clawson sat at one side of the room, holding the hand of Mr. Blake. Professor Hyslop and myself declined to hold the hands of Mrs. Blake, as we cared nothing whatever for physical manifestations, but desired only *mental phenomena* which would be of the same value whether given in darkness or in light.

We sat a very long time, and it seemed that nothing was to occur. Finally a blue light floated over the table between us, and another appeared near the floor close to where Mr. Clawson and Mr. Blake were sitting. The trumpet on the table was also lifted up over my head and dropped to the floor by my side.

Finally, the deep-toned voice of a man spoke. It appeared to be about a foot above and behind Mrs. Blake's head. The voice was melodious, soft, low in pitch, and very distinct. This is the voice that is claimed to be that of her dead son, Abe. There was a note of sadness in it, and it spoke these words: “My friends, I am sorry to say that owing to my mother's weak condition, it will be impossible for us to give any manifestations that will be worth anything this evening. We deeply regret this, but it is beyond our power to give you anything of value, as she is very weak.”

It is hardly necessary to say that we refused to take this statement as a dismissal, but continued to remain. In a short time we heard a man's voice of a different tone entirely, which Dr. X— recognized as the voice of his grandfather. These voices were open,—that is, they were in no trumpet and were vocal. The tone of this last voice was that of a very old man, and the conversation was commonplace. Soon a much more robust and powerful man's voice spoke, and said: “James, we will give way to the others.” This voice Dr. X— recognized as the usual voice which claimed to be that of his father.

A lady's voice now addressed Professor Hyslop, and some little conversation was carried on, but with no satisfactory results. I now reached down to the floor, and taking the trumpet, placed one end to my ear and gave the other end to Mrs. Blake. The voices issuing from it could be heard by the other persons present. The first voice appeared to be that of a girl, so I handed the

trumpet to Mr. Clawson. The voice said, "Don't you know me, Daddie?"

"Who are you, Edna?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Why, you know me Daddie," answered the voice.

"Are you Edna Jackson?" asked Mr. Clawson. This was the name of a dead friend of his daughter.

"You know I am not Edna Jackson," responded the voice.

"If you are my daughter, tell me where mamma is."

"At home."

"Yes, but where?" insisted Mr. Clawson. The reply to this was inarticulate, but resembled "Kansas City," which was the correct place.

"Is she in St. Louis?" he asked.

"You know she is not," the voice replied.

"Is she in St. Joe?"

"No, no. She is in — — —," replied the voice. The first words were given with great energy and were almost vocal, but the last words were inarticulate. The latter, however, resembled "Kansas City." I then asked the voice to repeat the name, but it grew so weak that I could not distinguish the words. So far, everything was entirely unsatisfactory, and we were greatly discouraged.

I now took the trumpet. That the reader may fully understand what is to follow, I shall state a few facts. My Grandmother Daily, in the latter part of her life, resided in the country in Andrew County, Missouri. There my mother grew up. My grandmother died thirteen years ago. My mother's maiden name was "Sarah Frances Daily." She was always known to all as "Fannie Daily," and where she now resides is known to every one as "Fannie Abbott." Even Mr. Clawson did not then know her correct Christian name. My eldest sister, Ada, who is now Mrs. Humphrey, was residing in the village of Verdon, Nebraska. She and I as children, used to visit our grandmother, Mrs. Daily, and we were great favorites with her. She always called my sister "Adie," and myself "Davie." This was many years ago.

A voice in the trumpet now addressed me, claiming to be that of my grandmother, Mrs. Daily.

"Well, Grandma, what do you wish to say?" I asked.

"Davie, I love you, and I am all right. It is all right Davie, it is all right; and I want you to tell your mother that you talked to me, and tell your father, too," said the voice.

"You want me to tell my mother and my father that you talked to me?" I repeated, hardly knowing what to say.

"Yes, Davie, and tell Adie, too," replied the voice very plainly. "Tell whom?" I asked, being greatly surprised, as this came upon me like a gleam of light out of a chasm of darkness.

"Tell Adie, too," the voice again repeated. It certainly seemed incredible that this voice could manifest such intimate knowledge of my family's names, one thousand miles away. I thereupon decided to further test this knowledge.

"Grandma, what relation is Ada to me?" I quickly asked.

"Why, sister Adie, Davie. Tell sister Adie. You know what I mean—tell sister Adie." This had come so suddenly that I was for a moment dumbfounded; but I quickly decided to ask a test question that I did not think the voice could answer.

"Grandma, now if this is really you talking to me, you know my mother's first name. Tell it to me," I said.

"Sarah," answered the voice, quick as a flash. It was so quickly answered that the name "Sarah" had not entered my own consciousness at the instant. I had asked the test question so very quickly, that I had given all of my thought *to the question, and none to the correct answer*; and I had dimly in my consciousness only the name "Fannie." Thus the name "Sarah" really momentarily surprised me, and I had to think a mere instant before I realized that it was correct. I did not repeat the name for fear of a misinterpretation of sounds.

"What do you say it is?" I again asked.

"Sarah," again the voice plainly responded. There could be no mistake, but I did not repeat the name as most would have done.

"Mrs. Blake, what do you understand that name to be?" I asked, turning to her.

"Why, it sounds like Sary," she replied. I then conceived the idea of having the voice give the first names of Mrs. Daily's other children, but it here disappeared. I ask the reader to substitute himself for the writer, and for the names "Ada," and "Sarah," to substitute names in his own family; and then to go over the foregoing dialogue, using these substituted names; to imagine himself in a strange country among strangers, and then to note the peculiar effect upon himself. He will then understand the peculiar subjective effect that this had upon the writer. A gentleman's voice now spoke inarticulately.

"Let my uncle come," I said.

"Let our mutual uncle come," spoke Mr. Clawson. This question, conveying within itself our relationship, being spoken, I now said, "Yes, let our mutual uncle come."

"Well, I am here," spoke a man's voice near the table top in a few moments.

"If you are our uncle, give us your name," I requested.

"Dave, I am Uncle Dave," now spoke the voice. We had an uncle whose Christian name was "David Patterson," and who was dead.

"If you are Uncle Dave, tell me your second name," I requested. The voice pronounced a name that resembled "Parker." It began with the letter "P," but we could not understand what followed.

"Dave, you were named after me," continued the voice.

"What is your last name?" I asked. This was "Abbott"; but the voice replied with an inarticulate sentence, in which we distinguished the name "Harvey." My uncle Richard Harvey and the uncle whose voice this purported to be, were quite intimate many years ago.

One remarkable feature of the voice which claimed to be that of my uncle David, was that it resembled his voice when alive, to an extent *sufficient to call to my mind a mental picture of his appearance*; and for an instant to give me that inner feeling of his presence that hearing a well-known voice always produces in one. *I said nothing of this at the time.* I may say that during all of our sittings, *no other voice bore any resemblance to the voice of the person to whom it claimed to belong*, so far as I was able to detect. As this uncle had died only a few years before, I have a vivid remembrance of his voice.

At this point Abe's voice spoke and said, "Gentlemen, you will have to excuse my mother for this evening. Her strength is exhausted."

We now asked permission to return the following morning. Mr. Blake agreed to go to a telephone on the following morning, and to "call up" Dr. X— and to inform him if Mrs. Blake were well enough to receive us. We now took our departure. When crossing the river in the darkness I asked Professor Hyslop if he had heard my "slip of the tongue." Dr. X— spoke up and said that he had, but that he thought that Mrs. Blake did not hear it. Mr. Clawson now incautiously spoke and said, "Well, it doesn't matter. I do not care who knows who I am. I am George Clawson of Kansas City, and there is no use to conceal it." He was so disappointed at getting nothing definite from his daughter "Georgia," that he forgot his discretion. While still on the river Mr. Clawson spoke to me and said, "Did you notice how that voice sounded like

Uncle Dave's when it first spoke?" I replied that I did, but that I had thought it to be partly my own imagination. The other parties in the boat will remember this conversation.

The following morning Mr. Blake telephoned our friend, and announced his willingness to receive us. As soon as we had dictated our reports of the previous evening, Professor Hyslop, Mr. Clawson, and myself started for Mrs. Blake's house. Dr. X— did not accompany us, but remained at home to attend to other duties. We arrived at the cottage in due time, and found Mrs. Blake in excellent spirits and much improved physically. A little granddaughter of Mrs. Blake's was playing in the street and entered with us. This pretty little child was but four years of age and seemed a great favorite with her grandmother.

Mrs. Blake informed us that this child was developing a power just like her own. We asked for a demonstration. Professor Hyslop took the little child on his lap, and I gave her one end of the trumpet. Immediately whisperings in the trumpet could be heard, but I could understand nothing except the question, "Can you hear me?"

Mrs. Blake now took the trumpet. She and I allowed its two ends to rest in our palms for a few moments. Soon it rolled on our palms one-half of a revolution. I now heard a syllable of a vocal voice which appeared to originate near the end of the trumpet in Mrs. Blake's hand. I placed the trumpet to my ear, but could understand nothing. In a short time the inarticulate voice seemed to have changed to the whisperings of a lady. Finally, Mrs. Blake said, "I believe they want to talk to you, sir." This remark was addressed to Mr. Clawson, whose identity, so far as we knew, was entirely unknown to Mrs. Blake. She makes it a rule to ask no questions, and apparently scorns being given any information, even to the name of her sitter. Up to this time Mr. Clawson had been standing very close to Mrs. Blake and intently watching her. I noticed this and feared it would embarrass her. I now surrendered the trumpet to Mr. Clawson. I seated myself so that I could hold my right ear against the middle of the trumpet, and I faced Mr. Clawson, thus carelessly turning my back upon Mrs. Blake.

Instantly the voice appeared exceedingly loud and strong, and I could understand the words from the outside with perfect clearness. I will mention the fact that from this time forward, in about one-half of Mr. Clawson's tests, I could understand the words from the outside of the trumpet and thus assure myself that he did not

misinterpret the sounds. In his other tests I had to trust entirely to his sense of hearing and his own discretion.

"Who is this?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Grandma Daily," responded the voice.

"How do you do, Grandma? I used to know you, didn't I?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"How do you do, George? I want to talk to Davie," responded the voice. "I can hear you from here, Grandma," I said from my position beside the trumpet.

"He gives her strength; that is why she speaks so much stronger now," said Mrs. Blake, indicating Mr. Clawson.

"Keep your position. I can hear her from here," I said to Mr. Clawson.

"Grandma, tell me the names of some of those big boys of yours," requested Mr. Clawson. Here some inarticulate words could be heard, but could not be understood.

I must state that I have a living aunt by the name of Mrs. Benight, who is a daughter of my Grandmother Daily. She resides in the country in Buchanan County, Missouri, and is not known far from home. Practically all of her life has been spent within a radius of a few miles from there. Her first name is "Melissa," but she has always been known by the name of "Lissie." At the time of this sitting Mr. Clawson did not know of this aunt, but he did know of her dead sister, Mrs. Cora Holt. This he had learned from my *Open Court* article referred to before. It was this last name that Mr. Clawson had in mind during what followed.

"Grandma, tell me the first name of one of your daughters," requested Mr. Clawson.

"— — —." The reply I could not understand from the outside.

"Lizzie?—Lizzie?—You say Lizzie?" asked Mr. Clawson. I could hear the reply between each of these questions, but could not understand it. After the sitting when crossing the river, I asked Mr. Clawson about this incident. He said that the name seemed undoubtedly to be "Lizzie," but that the letter "z" seemed to have more of the sound of "s." Up to this moment, strange to say, the name "Lissie" had not occurred to me; but when he spoke of the sound of the letters, I immediately thought of this aunt and informed him of her. I then learned that he did not know of her.

"What is the name of Dave's mother?" now asked Mr. Clawson.

"Sarah," answered the voice.

"Yes, but she has another name. What is her other name?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Daily."

"That is not what I mean. Give me her other name," continued Mr. Clawson.

"Abbott," answered the voice.

"That is not what I mean. She has another name. What do I call her when I speak to her? I call her by some other name. What do I call her?" insisted Mr. Clawson.

"Aunt Fannie. Don't you think I know my own daughter's name, George?" plainly spoke the voice, so that I could understand the words outside.

"I know you do, Grandma, but I wanted to ask you for the sake of proving your identity," continued Mr. Clawson.

"I want Davie to tell his mother and his father that he talked to me, that I am all right, and I don't want him to forget it. Davie, I want you to be good and pray, and meet me over here," continued the voice, speaking plainly so that I could hear outside.

When I used to visit my dear old grandmother many years ago, upon parting with me she would invariably shed tears, and say, "Davie, be good and pray, and meet me in heaven." These were the last words she ever spoke to me.

As I write these lines there comes before my eyes a vision. I am looking back through the vista of the years. I see an old-fashioned homestead in the hills of Missouri. There is a grassy yard and the great trees cast their shadows on the sward. The sunlight is glinting down through the leaves, and an aged lady stands at the door. Her form is stooped; and her withered hand, which trembles violently, is supported by a cane. The tears are streaming down her cheeks, for she knows it is the last time she will look upon the youth who stands before her. Before the lady lies but the darkness of the approaching night. Before the youth stretches the waving green fields of the future, lighted by the sunlight of hope. Each knows it to be the last parting on earth, for the lady is very feeble. Her trembling hand clings to mine, while with tears streaming down her aged cheeks she says these words: "Davie, be good and pray, and meet me in heaven." I turn from her, a choking sensation in my throat, and I hurry to the old-fashioned gate. I can not trust myself to speak; but I look back at her, and she is watching me as far as her dim eyes can see. Then she slowly totters back to her lonely room.

The vision has vanished. It lingers but in the mists of memory.

The dear old grandmother sleeps these many years in the grave-yard ; the youth has grown to manhood, the snows of approaching winter already glisten in his hair, and the fleeting years are hurrying all too quickly.

With the exception of the words "over here" in place of the word "heaven," these last words spoken by the voice were the identical words which my grandmother spoke to me the last time I ever heard her voice. But I must not write this article to express sentiment, neither must I permit it to interpret facts. I must merely report what occurred with sacred accuracy.

Just after the last words spoken by my grandmother's supposed voice, the loud voice of a man broke into the conversation. It was vocal in tone, low in pitch, and had a weird effect.

"How do you do?" said the voice.

"How do you do, sir? Who are you?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Grandpa," replied the voice.

"Grandpa who?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Grandpa Abbott," said the voice and it repeated, hurriedly, a name that sounded like "David Abbott"; and then the voice expired with a sound as of some one choking or strangling, as it went off dimly and vanished. "David" was my grandfather Abbott's Christian name.

The lady now laid the trumpet down in her lap and said, "Let it rest in our hands until we regain strength." In a few moments she turned her chair so as to face the opposite direction, and said, "I will use my other ear ; my arm is tired."

Now, while they were resting, I determined to offer a suggestion to the lady indirectly, and to note what the effect would be. Turning to Mr. Clawson, but not calling him by name, I remarked, "It is strange that those we want so much do not come ; that your daughter, to whom you would rather talk than to any one, does not speak to you. You have evidently talked to her, and she seems to identify herself ; but is it not strange that she does not give her name correctly?" I said this in order to convey to the lady the fact that the name which appeared to be "Edna" was not the correct name of the gentleman's daughter.

When next he raised the trumpet to his ear a whispered voice said, "Daddie, I am here."

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Georgia," replied the voice.

"Georgia? Georgia, is this really you?" asked Mr. Clawson, with intense emotion and earnestness.

"Yes, Daddie. Didn't you think I knew my own name?" asked the voice.

"I thought you did, Georgia, but could not understand why you would not tell it to me. Where do we live, Georgia?"

"In Kansas City," responded the voice, and then continued, "Daddie, I am so glad to talk to you, and so glad you came here to see me. I wish you could see my beautiful home. We have flowers and music every day."

"Georgia, what is the name of your sweetheart to whom you were engaged?" now asked Mr. Clawson.

"— — —." The reply could not be understood.

"Georgia, spell the name," requested Mr. Clawson.

"A—r—c, Ark," responded the voice, spelling out the letters and then pronouncing the name.

"Give me his full name, Georgia," requested Mr. Clawson.

"Archimedes," now responded the voice.

"Will you spell the name for me?" asked Mr. Clawson who wished to prevent a misinterpretation of sounds.

"A—r—c—h—i—m—e—d—e—s," spelled the voice.

"Where is Ark, Georgia?" now asked Mr. Clawson. The reply could not be understood, but an inarticulate sentence was spoken ending with a word which sounded like "Denver."

"Do you say he is in Denver, Georgia?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"No, no," responded the voice loudly and almost vocally, and then continued, "He is in New York." This, Mr. Clawson afterwards informed me, was correct; but he thought the gentleman was at the time out of New York City, though somewhere in that state.

"Daddie, I want to tell you something. Ark is going to marry another girl," now continued the voice.

"Georgia, you say Ark is going to marry another girl?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Yes, Daddie, but it's all right. It's all right now. He does not love her as he did me, but it is all right. I do not care now. I would like to talk to Muzzie," continued the voice.

Here a voice, vocal in tone and of the depth of a man's, broke into the conversation. Mr. Clawson, who could not restrain his tears, owing to the intense dramatic effect of the recent conversation, stepped for an instant into the adjoining room to obtain control of his emotions and to recover his self-possession.

I placed the trumpet to my ear and the man's voice said, "I want to talk to Davie. Davie, do you know me?"

"No. Who are you?" I replied.

"Grandpa Daily, Davie. Tell your mother that I talked to you, Davie."

"You want me to tell my mother you talked to me?" I asked.

"Yes, and tell your father, too," responded the voice. Mr. Clawson had by this time returned to the room; and, impetuously seizing the trumpet from my hand and placing it to his ear, exclaimed, "Hello, Grandpa! I used to know you, didn't I?"

"Of course you did," responded the voice.

"Who am I, Grandpa?"

"Oh, I know you well. You are George Clawson. I know you well." This response of the voice was just as loud and plain as if a gentleman were in the room conversing with us.

"Grandpa, tell us the name of that river we used to cross when we went over to your house?" now asked Mr. Clawson.

The voice answered inarticulately; and although the question was repeated several times, no response could be obtained that could be understood. The river is known as "The Hundred-and-Two." If a correct answer had been given, we should have considered it quite evidential. The voice gradually grew weaker; and then a lady's voice spoke and apparently addressed Professor Hyslop. The latter gentleman took the trumpet; but the words were weak, being mere whispers, and nothing definite could be understood.

Mrs. Blake then said, "We can't understand you. Now please give way to those who can speak more loudly." I now took the trumpet and a gentleman's voice addressed me in vocal tones. I asked who was speaking, and the voice responded, "Grandpa Abbott." I now asked the voice to give me my father's name. This it was unable to do. However, it pronounced an inarticulate name that resembled "Alexander." The first two letters were certainly "A" and "L," but we could not be certain of that which followed. Mr. Clawson tried to get a response, but could do no better, and the voice grew weak. My father's full Christian name is "George Alexander." Mr. Clawson knew his middle initial; but until after all of our sittings, did not know for what it stood.

Here another loud, vocal, gentleman's voice spoke and said, "Gentlemen, you will have to excuse my mother. Her strength is exhausted." This voice was identical with the one of the evening before, which claimed to be that of her son Abe.

During the sitting, at one time, when the trumpet lay in the lap and while Mrs. Blake was conversing in her natural tones, the short guttural syllable of a gentleman's voice spoke, at what seemed afterwards to be the same instant that she was speaking. I noticed

that her own voice ceased instantly as if she had been interrupted. I was not expecting this, and could not be certain whether the two voices spoke simultaneously, or whether the illusion was produced by the rapid alternation of the voices coming unexpectedly. This occurred again in the afternoon of this second day.

Mr. Clawson now walked out upon the porch with Professor Hyslop, where he shed tears. He remarked, "I feel just as I did the day we buried her; and I have surely talked to my dead daughter this day."

I remained inside to try and induce Mrs. Blake to cross the river that afternoon, and visit our friend's office. She seemed well enough; and I told her candidly that I desired to have a photograph taken with her in the group, and that I expected to write an account of my experiments for some publication. This seemed to please her and she readily agreed to go, providing we would send the carriage, and also if we could secure the consent of her husband. This we now did. The latter was away at the beginning of this sitting, but had just returned. He consented, although the ride must be for several miles, as it was necessary to drive down the river to a large ferry.

We now returned to the house of our friend. Immediately after noon he sent his driver after Mrs. Blake, while he went to the train to meet some guests for whom he had telephoned during the forenoon. Soon after this, Mrs. Blake arrived; and we took her arms and assisted her to the Doctor's parlors, while we carried her crutches in our hands. After she had rested for a while and as soon as a photographer arrived, to whom we had telephoned, the accompanying photograph was made. During the exposure, whispered voices were in the trumpet, but I could not understand the articulation. Professor Hyslop is standing, the writer holds one end of the trumpet to his ear, while between him and the medium Mr. Clawson appears on one knee.

I will mention that Mr. Clawson rode to the city with the driver when he went after Mrs. Blake; and upon the latter's coming, he rode from the city to the residence of our friend with her. I was not with him, but he assured me that he gave her no information during this fifteen minute drive.

Soon after the photograph was made in our friend's office, we retired to his parlors, where we seated Mrs. Blake by an open window in a large arm-chair. Here we conducted the most successful experiment of our entire visit. The voices were mostly vocal or nearly so, and the responses came instantly. To all appearances,

the ride and the excitement of sitting for a photograph, seemed to have stimulated Mrs. Blake to a great extent. One of the supposed gentlemen's voices echoed so loudly, that it could have been heard one hundred feet out on the lawn. This voice was conversing with the governor of a state, who happened to be present. I am not at liberty to give his name. As far as I could infer from the conversation, it seemed to satisfy the sitter.

Mr. Clawson first took the trumpet and addressed what he supposed to be the voice of his dead daughter. He said, "Georgia, give me your second name."

"Chastine," responded the voice.

"Repeat that again, please," asked Mr. Clawson.

"Georgia Chastine," responded the voice this time.

"Spell the name," Mr. Clawson now requested.

"C—h—a—s—t—i—n—e," spelled the voice.

His daughter had boarded with a lady whom she called "Aunt Burgess," while going to school in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts. Before this lady had married Mr. Burgess, Mr. Clawson had known her as "Aunt Tina." It was this last name that he had in mind, when that which follows took place. His daughter at this time had a favorite schoolmate by the name of "Nellie Biggs"; and also, when she went to school in Kansas City, she had another school-girl friend whose first name was "Mary." Of these facts I was in ignorance at the time; but I heard a good portion of the answers given in the following conversation, though at the time I did not know whether or not they were correct.

Mr. Clawson now asked, "Where did you board when you went to school in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts?"

"With Aunt Burgess," responded the voice.

"Tell me the name of your schoolmate friend," Mr. Clawson asked.

"Nellie Biggs," instantly responded the voice.

"With what friend did you go to school in Kansas City?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Mary," responded the voice. It then continued, "If you will wait a minute, I will give you my pet name for her." However, this the voice did not do, and in a moment Mr. Clawson asked, "Georgia, which grandmothers are with you?"

"Grandma Abbott and Grandma Daily," responded the voice.

"Is there not another one?" Mr. Clawson asked.

"Do you mean my mother's mother, my own grandma?"

"Yes."

"Yes. Grandma Marcus is here," responded the voice. I will say that Mrs. Marquis had died but recently, and that her grandchildren always pronounced her name as if spelled "Marcus."

"Daddie, I want you to tell Ark that I want to talk to him before he gets married. I am so anxious to talk to him and to tell him something," spoke the voice.

"Is there any medium in New York that he can go and see?"

"I do not know of any. Bring him here and have Mamma meet him here," requested the voice.

"Georgia, don't you want to talk to Cousin Dave a minute?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Yes, Daddie," spoke the voice. I now took the trumpet.

It was here that the loudest voice of all spoke and desired to converse with the governor whom I mentioned before. The voice first spoke apparently in Mrs. Blake's lap, just as I was placing the trumpet to my ear. The voice was very deep-toned, and reverberated over the large room so loudly that Professor Hyslop, who had stepped out, our friend's stenographer, and others entered and stood around the walls listening. When this conversation ceased I again took the trumpet.

A voice now addressed me, saying, "How do you do, David?"

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am Grandma Abbott, and I always loved you, David, the best of all," responded the voice.

I will state for the information of the readers, that my father has always been quite skeptical as to the life after death, the inspiration of the Scriptures, etc.; and that in his younger days he used quite frequently to engage in arguments in support of his position. This seemed to grieve my grandmother greatly; and I have a remembrance of her frequently asking me, as a child, never to read the writings of Thomas Paine. I also now quite plainly remember (as does also my eldest sister) my grandmother saying to my father during the arguments referred to, these words, "Oh, George, don't be a 'doubting Thomas'!" According to our best remembrance we, as children, heard this expression many times. At the time of this sitting this had completely passed from my mind, and only after some months has it come into my memory clearly.

I now asked the voice, "Grandma, have you any message to send to my father?"

"Yes, tell him I am all right, and tell him not to be a 'doubting Thomas'."

"Grandma, that I may convince him that it was really you who talked to me, tell me his name."

"George Alexander Abbott," spoke the voice, instantly and distinctly, so that all could hear.

"Grandma, do you remember the summer that you spent at our home long ago?" I asked.

"Very well, David, and I always loved you," replied the voice.

"Grandma, can't you tell me something to tell my father, some little thing that will convince him that it was you who talked to me?" I asked.

"Yes, ask George if he remembers the last day I spent at his house — — —." The word "house" was followed by a number of indistinct words, in which I thought I heard the words, "had for dinner." Mr. Clawson said that he understood that it spoke of something "making her sick," but I can not be sure of this. Then the voice revived from its weakness and said, "Don't forget to tell George that I talked to you, and that I want him not to be a 'doubting Thomas' any longer and to pray." Our friend here spoke and said, "That is the first time I have ever heard that expression used at any of Mrs. Blake's sittings. Here a whispered voice spoke, asking to talk to its "papa." No one seemed to know for whom this was, and finally Mr. Clawson took the trumpet.

"I want to talk to you. You are my papa," said the voice.

"Where were you born," asked Mr. Clawson.

"I can't remember," replied the voice.

"What is your name?" asked Mr. Clawson.

"Papa, I never had any name. Tell mother I am here with sister and am getting along fine," responded the voice.

I then took the trumpet and said, "I shall ask for a person who does not come without asking. I want to talk to my father-in-law, Mr. Miller." After this we sat with the trumpet in our laps, waiting, as Mrs. Blake had just encouraged me to ask for any one I might desire. Mr. Miller had resided in Beatrice, Nebraska. His wife is now living. Her first name is "Hannah." The first name of my wife is "Fannie," and one of his sons has a wife whose first name is "Lody."

Soon a gentleman's voice seemed to speak in Mrs. Blake's lap, and we placed the trumpet to our ears.

"Who are you," I asked.

"I am Mr. Miller," responded the voice. It continued, "I want to send a message to my daughter. Tell her I am all right."

"Mr. Miller, to prove to my wife that it was really you who

talked to me, tell me, what is her first name?" I said. The voice then repeated a word that did not seem to bear any resemblance to my wife's name, and followed this by a number of inarticulate words; until finally, I heard a name repeated a number of times that sounded like "Fannie," and I was quite sure that it was, but it could have been "Annie." Mr. Clawson, who was listening at the outside of the trumpet, seemed to consider the answer correct beyond any dispute, and repeated the name "Fannie" with a rising inflection. After this the voice said, "I want to talk to Fannie." Mr. Clawson, who thought my wife's mother was dead, said, "Ask for her mother." I then said, "Is Fannie's mother with you?"

"No, Dave, you know she is living, and I would like to talk to her."

"Tell me her first name, Mr. Miller," I then said.

This was followed by some inarticulate sentences in which we heard the word "Dody" repeated a number of times. I know of no one by that name, and Mr. Clawson did not know of my wife's sister-in-law whose first name is "Lody."

I started to straighten this matter out; but Mrs. Blake wearily threw down the trumpet and smilingly said, "You would talk to the spirits all night. I can go no further."

I conversed with her pleasantly for a little while after this. I said, "Mrs. Blake, there are those who would call this ventriloquism."

She replied, "I would not care if the greatest van-triloquist in the world were here right now," then lowering her voice with the intense earnestness of conscious power, she continued, "he could not tell you your dead mother's name."

I did not reply, but I was thinking. Certainly in all of my experience, I had never met ventriloquists with such powers; neither had I ever before heard such a wonderful exhibition of voices. I told Mrs. Blake that I desired to keep as a memento the trumpet we had used, and I still have it. I had a little visit with her at the end of this sitting, and found her very intelligent. However, her education has been neglected. Were a critical observer to inspect certain specimens of her chirography which I possess, he would conclude that were she able to correctly spell such names as "Archimedes" and "Chastine," this would be a phenomenon on a par with her other achievements.

I, however, found her quite intelligent, and I enjoyed listening to her spiritual philosophy. The intense earnestness with which

she apparently portrayed an absolute knowledge of the "hereafter" was very refreshing.

We now assisted Mrs. Blake to the carriage; and placing her crutches by her side and thanking her, we bade her good-bye. Professor Hyslop expected to remain for some days and to conduct his investigations in private. That evening Mr. Clawson and myself returned to our homes.

I have been asked by many, what results Professor Hyslop obtained. This he must answer for himself. But I have reason to believe that his results were similar to ours. Any number of apparently marvelous incidents, illustrating Mrs. Blake's power, can be collected in the vicinity.

Prof. Hyslop took the written statement of Mr. Killgore, a business man residing in Kentucky, in regard to the following: Mr. Killgore deposited all checks in a bank. Mrs. Killgore kept all the currency in a safe, she alone having the combination to it. When her husband desired cash she furnished it to him. At her death all knowledge of the combination of this safe was lost. He tried to open it for some hours but had to give it up. Two months after his wife's death, while visiting Mrs. Blake and conversing with his wife's supposed voice, the latter told him to take a pencil and paper, and it would give him the combination. This he did, and on arriving home unlocked the safe within one minute's trial, using this combination.

Shortly after our return Dr. X—, together with his wife, a Mr. L. S. English and a Mrs. Humphrey Devereaux, conducted an experiment and reported it to me, both Dr. X— and his wife attesting to its truth in writing. The Doctor took eight O. N. T. spool boxes, packing in each, wrapped in cotton, a different article which had belonged to his father. Rubber bands were now placed around each box, and the latter thoroughly mixed and stacked on the Doctor's desk. His bookkeeper was now brought into the room and requested to draw a box at random from the stack, while the Doctor turned his back. The object was to select a box the contents of which the doctor would not himself know. The selected box the Doctor placed in his coat pocket. He then placed in another pocket his father's pocket book, and the four started for the seance.

On the way the Doctor gave the pocket book to L. S. English. During the seance the supposed voice of the Doctor's father spoke. Dr. X— then said, "Father, can you tell if we have anything with us that formerly belonged to you?"

"Yes, you have," answered the voice.

"What is it?"

"My pocketbook."

"Who has your pocketbook?" the Doctor asked.

"L. S. English," replied the voice. The voice then resumed a previous conversation with Mrs. Devereaux. During this time the Doctor requested his wife to ask the voice what was in the former's pocket.

"Colonel, can you tell me the contents of the box James has in his pocket?" she asked. *

"Yes."

"I am very anxious to have you do this so that I can report it to Professor Hyslop, and if you say so I will take the lid off the box to enable you to see better," spoke the Doctor.

"That is not necessary. I can see the contents as well with the lid on as with it off," responded the voice.

"Well, what is in it?" asked the Doctor.

"My pass I used to travel with," replied the voice. The Doctor's father used to have several annual passes. Some of them he never used, but one he used almost exclusively. Upon examining the box it was found to contain this pass.

Shortly after our return, I received a letter from Mr. Clawson. He stated that he had just received a letter from the fiancé of his dead daughter, and that in it the writer stated that he was contemplating marriage with a certain lady. This letter bore date of some time previous; and with it was an additional note of a later date, stating that the writer had supposed the letter mailed, but that he had just found it in his pocket and that he now hastened to mail it. This letter was therefore already written at the time of our sittings.

After this, at Mr. Clawson's request, this young gentleman journeyed to Huntington, where he met the wife of Mr. Clawson, and the two carried on an investigation. They expected much from the supposed voice of Mr. Clawson's daughter, but received very little. In fact, they received so little that they considered the journey a failure.

However, in looking over their reports (which I have), I find that they each received from other voices information partly on a par with what we received. A number of correct names were given, including such as "Arista," and also the name "Hyder." The latter is that of an acquaintance who, it was thought, had committed suicide a couple of weeks previously. To repeat these is but to multiply instances. It is, however, remarkable that, from the supposed voice

* "Colonel" and "James" are substituted names.

of Mr. Clawson's daughter, they did not even receive the information which previously had been given us.

IV.

In an attempt to solve in a manner satisfactory to myself the problem presented to me by this marvelous exhibition, I have divided the phenomena into two parts,—the physical, and the psychical or mental. The former includes the phenomena of the voices, light and heavy trumpet, floating trumpet, and lights. The latter includes merely the correct names and information furnished by the voices.

In regard to the floating trumpet at the dark seance, I will say that I attach no importance to this whatever. The trumpet lay upon the table in front of Mrs. Blake, and *there was nothing whatever to prevent her lifting it and dropping it*, as is done by the many mediums of the land. As to the lights, they were in appearance exactly similar to those produced by dampening the finger and then touching the dampened portion with the head of a sulphur match. The light that floated over the table was at no time further from Mrs. Blake than she could reach. The light on the floor near Mr. Blake appeared to be about where the toe of his shoe was situated. This phenomenon did not in any way differ from that of the many other mediums producing it. As to the light and heavy trumpet, I noticed the position of the fingers of Mrs. Blake with reference to the flange or ear-piece in her hands. When the end of the trumpet which the sitter held showed a tendency to move upwards, these fingers were so placed, that in case a slight pressure of some of the fingers were applied on the flange, it would give the trumpet this tendency. Such pressure could not have been detected by the eye. I noticed that when the tendency of the trumpet was downward, the position of the fingers was reversed. I find it quite easy to reproduce this phenomenon by this simple means. The trumpet can be caused to roll or turn on the hand by slightly tilting the latter. I also find that the merest slipping of the finger on the trumpet while under slight pressure makes very good raps upon it, but we heard no raps at *our* investigation.

This leaves in the first division the one important thing, the phenomenon of the voices, to be considered. Strange as it may seem to many, I will lay it down as a fact beyond any dispute that all of the articulated words, whether vocal or mere whispers, *came out of the ears of Mrs. Blake*. Before my journey I was confident that sound waves could not exist unless they were first produced by

the vibration of some material thing. I was also satisfied that intelligent language if not produced by a phonograph, could only originate in the vocal organs of some living human being. The question with me was, where was this person located and by what means were the waves conducted to the trumpet?

As soon as I saw plainly that there was no assistant and no mechanism in the building, I was confident that the words originated with Mrs. Blake herself. In fact, this was the simplest way out of the difficulty. I next noticed that, although voices were in the trumpet when it was removed from her ear for a moment, at such times they were not so loud; *and that in no such case could the articulation be understood*. If one desired to understand whispered words, it was absolutely necessary to place the trumpet to the ear of Mrs. Blake. They then came out plainly. When the trumpet was in the hand, I noted that the ear was slightly turned towards the opening in the trumpet, and at such times a listener at the other end of it would hear sounds in the trumpet instead of out of it. I have since verified this by experiment. The trumpet gathers and concentrates the sounds. One, on listening to this, would afterwards remember the sounds while the trumpet had been in the hand, and would forget the fact that this was but for a mere instant, and that he could not at that time understand the words. The illusion would thus be produced in the sitter's mind that the voices were able to speak in the trumpet, whatever its position.

Mrs. Blake practically acknowledged that the sounds came out of her ears, when she stated that as a little girl she heard them in her ears, and that she discovered that the use of a closed receptacle confined the sounds, making them plainer and enabling others to hear them better. When whispered words were spoken, it was far more difficult to locate their origin than when the loud and deep vocal tones of gentlemen's voices were speaking. During the latter, I frequently stood very near Mrs. Blake's head. I could plainly hear the voice emerging from her ear; that is, from the outside I could note the mellow effect of the tone in the trumpet, while I could at the same time detect what I call a "buzzing" of the tone near the ear, as a part of the vibrations escaped outward. I had done much experimenting for many years with phonograph horns, and various reproducers, and this training enabled me to detect these things very quickly. I could also at such times hear a third sound that was not nearly so loud as the voices. This was a species of "clucking"—at least, so I call it for want of a proper word to describe it. This seemed to be within her head, and I think came out of the nostrils.

This was particularly noticeable when the voices were very loud. It seemed that the production of loud, vocal words, without the use of the mouth or lips, resulted in this secondary effect. This sound was independent of the words, and did not belong to them except that it accompanied their production.

For a long time I marveled that Mr. Parsons could not have readily discovered the origin of these voices; and that he should not have done so seemed a great mystery to me, until I remembered that he heard only whispered voices, and also that he was at such times generally using one ear at the trumpet. This effectually prevented his making this discovery.

Now if these voices come out of the lady's ears, the question arises, "Where do they originate?" I am satisfied that the whispered words originate in her throat, and that the vocal voices are produced lower down in the chest. These sounds I believe are conducted from the throat through an *abnormal* Eustachian canal, to a point close to the tympanic membrane. The office of this membrane is to transmit sound waves; so that once they are there, the sound waves are easily transferred into the outer or auditory canal. How these sounds can be guided into either ear at will, and how the nostrils can prevent their exit, I can only surmise. The low, guttural, single syllables that were apparently in the lap, I believe were merely heard inside the chest or abdomen. As to the sounds Mr. Parsons heard when the trumpet was to the back, I can not say, unless they were heard somewhat like the pulsations of the heart are heard in a physician's stethoscope when it is placed against the chest.

When the little grandchild used the trumpet, we could plainly see the workings of its throat, although the most innocent look was in its pretty eyes. Mrs. Blake noticed our close scrutiny and remarked, "I do not know but that they may use her vocal organs." This remark was intended to explain to us that the use of the child's vocal organs was automatic, or rather directed by spirits of the dead, and not by the will-power of the child. It is natural to suppose that both she and the child use the same methods. Any one observing the junction of Mrs. Blake's throat and chest closely, will notice an extraordinary fullness indicating an abnormal development within it.

Since my journey, I myself, have done considerable experimenting in this line. I can now produce whispered words in the trumpet so that they may be understood as well as this child did, but of course I have not the natural gift possessed by Mrs. Blake.

While upon the subject, it is well to remark that I have learned that a few miles out in the country Mrs. Blake has a friend whom she visits very often; that this friend gives demonstrations the same as does she; but I am informed that the words are not nearly so plain. My informant states that it is very patent to an observer that the sounds are produced in her vocal organs. Now it is but a reasonable conclusion that if these ladies are quite friendly, both use the same means in producing these voices.

Readers of my book, *Behind the Scenes With the Mediums* will remember an account of a seance described in the Appendix, which was furnished me by a gentleman in Oldtown, Kentucky. This was where in the twilight a trumpet floated out of the door and up into the branches of the trees. This gentleman also wrote me in reference to Mrs. Blake, stating that he had known her all of his life, and that he "fought through the War of the Rebellion with Mr. Blake." He also informed me of this same medium friend of Mrs. Blake (of whom I had previously been informed), and he seemed to attribute equal and genuine powers to both. He described a dark seance which he attended, where, in his own language, "Both of these old ladies were present, and the seance was one grand hurrah of voices from start to finish."

I may state that I noticed the workings of Mrs. Blake's throat on some occasions, but that her lips were always tightly closed. That any one could reach such marvelous perfection in producing voices in this abnormal manner seems incredible, but it is certainly a fact. How Mr. Parsons heard the sounds of piano-playing I can not imagine, unless the lady possess a very perfect power of mimicry such as I have heard at times. He described the sounds to be as if one were simply running arpeggios. This would indicate that he heard but one tone at a time.

I should also mention that there are two ladies in Omaha, who produce the phenomenon of "Independent Voices." One of them gave sittings professionally for some years; but having more recently married a Catholic gentleman who disapproves of such things, she has discontinued such exhibitions excepting in private before a few intimate friends. I am informed that these voices speak up suddenly when unlooked for, while the lady is conversing. They appear to come out of her chest. One lady informs me that there is no doubt upon this point, as she was permitted to lay her ear against the lady's chest and listen. This former medium now claims that she, herself, does not understand this phenomenon, or what causes it.

Being now so closely connected with the Roman Catholic Church, she can not well claim that it is done by spirit agency.

The other lady's voices seem to come in the form of a kind of "whistle," and seem to come out of the nostrils. I am told that in neither case do these voices give correct information.

This now brings us to the consideration of the problem presented by the mental or psychical part of what we witnessed. I frankly say that I have not yet found a solution of this problem to my own satisfaction.

That spirits of the dead, if such exist, should be a party to deception of any kind, I positively can not believe. Knowing the origin of the voices beyond any question, I never can believe that I communicated with the dead. And yet, if Mrs. Blake's intelligence directed this conversation, from what source did she secure her accurate information?

It was suggested to me that possibly the dead caused these voices to sound in the seat of Mrs. Blake's hearing as a mere subjective phenomenon, and that she but repeated what she heard subjectively. That is, it was supposed that she did not perceive actual sound waves, but that she was caused to experience the same subjective sensations, that such sound waves would have produced. This is ingenious, but one with my natural skepticism could not accept it.

It was also suggested to me that possibly Mrs. Blake did not control her own vocal organs at the times when voices were speaking, but that spirits of the dead controlled them; or that they acted automatically, as it is claimed is the case with the hand of Mrs. Piper when executing her famous writings. Had Mrs. Blake made such claims as this openly, it would certainly have strengthened her case, but would have lessened the dramatic effect. I, however, could have no faith in this solution. For many reasons which I shall not take space to recount, I am quite sure that the will power of Mrs. Blake controlled her own vocal organs.

At the time, it seemed irresistibly borne in upon me that Mrs. Blake did receive subjective mental impressions from some source. I am by nature as skeptical about anything of the nature of so-called telepathy or mind-reading, as I am about spirit communion. And yet, *at the time*, I could not avoid the inner feeling that she possessed some kind of a "freak power"; that something in the nature of mental flashes would at times come to her, and that certain names or facts would be impressed upon her mind, or rather make their appearance there; that she, herself, possibly did not know the

cause of this, but by uttering what then came into her consciousness, she had found that it agreed with facts; that she was thus possessed of some freak mental gift, and that possibly she, herself, did not understand it.

Whether this was in any way connected with those around her I did not decide; but it seemed that it was, for otherwise tests could be given to those at a distance. As I could not believe that her information emanated from spirits of the dead, it seemed that she must draw her inspiration from those around her. And yet there was some evidence of knowledge being imparted, which was not in the minds of those about her. Could she have discovered this freak power, and as a child have come by degrees to claim that such information came to her from the dead? Could she, for instance, when with playmates, have said to one, "Your grandmother says so and so," naming the latter, and to another have made similar statements? She would then have noted the startling effects of such things as this, and this might have induced her to continue such experiments.

She then might have adopted gradually a means of using her own voice as if it were the voice of the dead, and have had this voice give directly the information she received in these flashes. She would have been liable to have tried this on account of the more startling effect of such a thing; and she might thus have learned to speak with her lips closed. The conversations that such experiments would induce, would naturally reveal to her many secrets, of which use could then be made. The great interest such things would excite in average persons, would be a sufficient inducement to cause a person to continue such experiments, thereby becoming very expert.

These things I considered, and this seemed a natural mode of evolution for the development of such peculiar gifts. In fact, it seemed that some cause for a slow development of such a gift must be predicated. To assume that any person would suddenly begin the development of such an un-heard-of gift as the ability to speak through the ear, with no reason to believe that success could ever be achieved, seems very improbable. It certainly seems more plausible that such development was gradually reached by previous experiments conducted under other stimuli. I asked myself again and again, Could any person be gifted with two such abnormal gifts as these, one physical and the other psychical?

It certainly seemed to me that it was the decline of the psychic power that now caused her to refuse sittings, or when giving one

to suddenly terminate it. In the matter of the voices there was certainly no decline of power, and I could only ascribe what she called weakness to the loss of this supposed psychic gift. According to Mr. Parsons, there was no hesitancy on her part in former times, and all were then afforded every opportunity for investigation. *At the time*, all of this seemed to me to be the most reasonable conclusion.*

After the lapse of time and much consideration of the mystery, I find that I should much prefer what I would call "a rational explanation." I feel that I should remember the lesson that my own previous investigations have taught me. As Dr. Carus has said, "When one stands before something which he can not explain, he should not conclude that it is inexplicable and attribute it to supernatural causes." I fully agree with the Doctor in this. The problem presented by the psychic part of this investigation, is by its nature very difficult of solution. But it surely does seem that if a rational explanation were possible one could find some evidences of it.

I have gone over my record, test by test, to see if I could find plausible possibilities of trickery connected with them. The following suggestions I do not in any way assert to be facts. I merely suggest them as possibilities to be considered in a search for a rational explanation.

First, it is well to state that I am positive that no information about myself was catalogued in any "Blue Book"† prior to the time of this investigation. I had at that time attended but one public meeting of spiritualists, and two public seances. I was afterwards on very friendly terms with the mediums conducting these and was well informed as to what secrets they possessed and used. I need not go into other details explaining why I am sure of this, as I

* I had promised a daily paper a brief account of this investigation at the time it was made. This I furnished with such limited explanations as I was then permitted by my contract to publish. The paper published the article, omitting without my knowledge some pages containing explanatory matter. This cast somewhat different an aspect on the case than I had intended. This account reached Dr. Isaac K. Funk. He wrote me, stating that he desired to include this account in his book, *The Psychic Riddle*. I wrote, requesting him not to do so, as I did not wish this case to be given to the public in exactly that form. I supposed that this ended the matter; but upon the appearance of his book, I found a partial account that varied somewhat from the original newspaper article. This explanation is offered to those who may have read the Doctor's book.

† Here I must own that the Editor of *The Open Court* does not agree with me and thinks that I am as likely to be found in the Blue Book as Mr. Clawson who has frequently attended seances. At any rate he is convinced that after having started the investigation under my own name, Mrs. Blake had had opportunity to obtain information, which she did not utilize until after she was able to identify us.

believe readers of my articles will be satisfied that I am critical enough to be certain on this point. It would be easy to attribute these things to something of the kind, and thus appear to have disposed of the problem. But truth and facts are what we wish to arrive at. No one knows better than a performer who has looked on from behind the scenes, the possibilities of "Blue Book" information. Also, no one knows better than he the actual limits of it in practical use, and the extent to which it is used at the present day.

Such being the case, the only other means of which I can conceive is either that information was secured in advance by some one employed for that purpose, or that it was extracted from us at the time by some cunningly contrived means. As to the first, I found very much difficulty in my endeavors to secure information relative to Mrs. Blake in advance. I must expect any effort on her part to secure information about myself, equally difficult at such a distance. I would consider such as utterly beyond Mrs. Blake's powers of correspondence, as would others, could they see the chirography before mentioned.

I am aware that strangers reading this article, and not being personally acquainted with my friend, Dr. X—, will naturally think of him in this connection. I emphatically state that he is of the very highest standing and possessed of the highest personal honor. Knowing him, I could not believe it possible for him to contemplate such a thing. Then again, the only motive that he could have for such action would be to prove to me that the lady's powers were as he had represented. On the other hand, his motive for fairness would be that he was deeply puzzled himself, and that he greatly desired a solution of the case. *For myself, I can not consider such a possibility*; but by a generous use of money, information could have been obtained about my family in Falls City, Nebraska, my childhood's home. In a small place like this, however, had any one furnished such information, it would be truly a miracle if such a fact had not reached my ears ere this. But it being a possibility, we must grant for the sake of fairness, that, by some means Mrs. Blake had secured information in advance in regard to myself; but we are still forced to admit that such a thing was utterly impossible with reference to Mr. Clawson, when no living person knew I would take him. Even he did not know until the last moment.

This brings us to the consideration of some means of securing information from us at the time. Now *at our first sitting* when the voice attempted to pronounce the name which sounded like "Artie" or "Arthur," I made the discovery that these voices would sometimes

pronounce a variety of names in an inarticulate manner. The sounds would first resemble one name, and then another. Nevertheless, the sitter could not conclude a wrong name had been pronounced, as he could not be certain of the name. If, on the other hand, the name sounded like the correct one, he would naturally in attempting to get it correctly, repeat it with a rising inflection.

That this system of "fishing" is quite frequently successful, I must conclude; but my quick discovery of it absolutely prevented its being so in my case. As evidence of this, I remind the reader of my refusal to repeat the names "Artie" and "Arthur"; and also the name "Grandma Daily" when I first heard it, lest the latter should have been "Grandma, Davie," instead. That misinterpretation of the sounds was a possibility with Mr. Clawson at the first sitting, must be considered. Otherwise we must conclude that here was some very extraordinary guessing. That the name "Brother Eddy" was a guess is quite improbable, but of course could be possible; while it would have been a possibility for the name "Grandma Daily" to have been secured in advance. If we do not accept some of these possibilities, then we are unable to advance any rational explanation. After this sitting, I cautioned Mr. Clawson on the above point; and as I could understand probably one-half of his tests thereafter, the possibility of this system being used in *these* cases, and in my own tests, can not be considered.

In regard to the pet names, "Muz," "Muzzie" and "Daddie," given Mr. Clawson at the first sitting, only the possibility of a misinterpretation of sounds can be suggested. The names given me, "Dave Harvey," "Asa," and my own name, belong to those that could have been secured in advance. This may also be said to be the case with this statement of my supposed brother, "I want to talk to mother." Had the lady, in sending this message, merely guessed that my mother was alive, there was one chance in two of failure. In the two statements to Mr. Clawson, "Your mother is here," and also "Your baby," there certainly seems a good chance of error, if this were mere guessing. Out of fairness I must call attention to these points. I also do so to illustrate how carefully I have analyzed every little occurrence. I must reiterate that Mr. Clawson was absolutely unknown at this first sitting.

We pass now to the tests given at the second sitting. It was here that I secured the names "Sarah" and "Ada," together with the correct relationship of the latter. There was no misinterpretation of sounds. These names belong to those that it would have been possible to have secured in advance, but at the time I was so thor-

oughly convinced that such was not the case, that I was greatly startled.

The tests given Mr. Clawson at this sitting may be neglected, as they were somewhat indefinite; and the use of the false name, "Edna," just about offset anything that he received. That a mutual uncle's name should be given when asked for, instead of the name of some of my other uncles, must be attributed to lucky guess work, if we assume that the name was secured in advance; for although Mr. Clawson's question revealed our relationship, there was nothing to indicate that he was my cousin through my father's family. There was one chance in two, that a name from my mother's family would have been given instead. As to the resemblance to my uncle's voice, I think that as we both noticed it separately, it was a genuine resemblance; but I can only attribute this to accident, for I am positive of the origin of the voice.

We pass now to the more remarkable tests given at the morning sitting of the second day. That Mr. Clawson's name and residence were given at this sitting, loses value as evidence, when we remember his statement in the boat the evening before. The boatman seemed too stupid to remember anything, especially when conversation in his presence was continuous; yet we must remember that his assistance was one possibility to be considered.

The names "Lizzie" or "Lissie," and "Aunt Fannie," given Mr. Clawson at this sitting, are among those that could have been secured in advance. As to the names "Georgia" and "Archimedes," with the latter's correct location at the time, together with the correct spelling of his name, I can offer nothing satisfactory; for I do not think there was any misinterpretation of sounds. The tests given me at this sitting need hardly be considered, for my grandmother's parting request may be a phrase generally used by the voices. It will be noticed that the supposed voice of Mr. Daily used one of the same expressions that the supposed voice of Mrs. Daily used. Therefore, some of these expressions are doubtless "stock phrases" of the lady's. The imperfect manner in which the voice attempted to give my father's correct name was very unsatisfactory. I may state that this was supposed at the time to be our last sitting, and that had the lady secured information relating to my relatives in advance, it is strange that my father's name was not given then.

We now pass to the still more remarkable sitting given in the afternoon of the second day. Here, the names "Chastine," "Aunt Burgess," "Nellie Biggs," "Mary," "Grandma Marcus," my father's correct name, and also my wife's first name, were given. In ad-

dition to this was the name "Dody," the request for my father "Not to be a 'doubting Thomas,'" and the statement that my wife's mother is alive. Some of these things Mr. Clawson did not know, and a number of them I did not know. We must, however, consider as a possibility that he might have imparted certain information to Mrs. Blake during his fifteen-minute ride. He assured me that he did not, and he is certainly sincere in his statement. Yet he at that time considered all of our sittings as finished, and might have forgotten his discretion. I know that he had visited a medium recently, securing certain tests from her. This he enjoyed relating, and he might have related some of these things to Mrs. Blake. In case he did so, the matter evidently passed from his memory very quickly, for he was positive that such was not the case. As to the peculiar request sent my father I can only suggest accident.

One point should be noted. While the voices could generally talk very plainly on non-evidential matter, as soon as a test name was asked for, in a number of instances, the voice immediately became weak, or another voice would "break in" to the conversation. However, this can not be said of all of the tests, for in many instances the names came rapidly and accurately.

However, the fact remains that we arrived in that community unknown, or at least Mr. Clawson was; and I had good reason to suppose that I was. Nevertheless, when we returned, Mrs. Blake had in some manner secured quite a minute history of our relatives regardless of all our precautions.

Some have asked me why I did not make this journey alone and entirely unknown. I answer that had I done so, I should have risked making my journey for nothing, as the lady might have been away or ill. Also there would have been no testimony but my own as to what occurred. I thought the other plan best.

I may mention that I have recently sent a gentleman, a partial believer in spiritualism, to visit Mrs. Blake, under the assumed name of "Douglass." She tried to avoid a sitting, claiming weakness. He, however, obtained one, but received no results, other than that a fictitious "Grandma Douglass" conversed with him. There had never been such a person. I have recently received word that Mrs. Blake has about lost her psychic power, and that it is now seldom that a sitting is given that I would regard as evidential.

While I am by nature very skeptical, I have tried to treat this case with perfect fairness from all sides, and to avoid taking sides myself. I have given all incidents with great care, no matter where they tended to lead. In doing this I have not considered my friendly

feelings for the lady who was certainly very kind to us, and who was wholly unlike the professional "grafters" known as mediums whom I have heretofore met.

That I have not fully solved the problem does not prove that I could not have done so, had my opportunities been greater; or that others could not have done so.

I will not assert that any fraud was used in giving the correct information; for unless I could substantiate such a statement and defend my position, it would be an error to do so. I can only suggest possibilities as I have done, and I must still leave the case to a certain extent shrouded in mystery. Anyway, I have faithfully reported to the reader all of the important details of what to me seemed, on the surface at least, to be one of the most marvelous-appearing performances ever given on earth.

UNEXPLAINED MYSTIFICATIONS.

BY PAUL CARUS.

THE Society for Psychical Research has without doubt done some good work. Its members have spared neither effort nor money to find an unequivocal proof of spirit communication, and yet they have failed. They have succeeded only in corroborating the convictions of those who were believers, but the most remarkable instances they can produce are insufficient to convert a skeptic. The case of Mrs. Blake is assuredly most noteworthy, and Mr. Abbott's description of it is instructive to any one who understands how to decipher the meaning of such experiments. Note, for instance, that a report of the facts written by Mr. Abbott himself was published in a daily paper with slight alterations and important omissions, consisting in explanations which "cast somewhat different an aspect on the case" than he had intended. And Mr. Abbott's mutilated account has been republished in Dr. Isaac K. Funk's fascinating book, *The Psychic Riddle*, where it appears on pages 158-165. There is no question but that both Dr. Funk and Prof. James H. Hyslop who communicated the account are honest and serious in their intentions to bring out the truth. And yet how different is the impression when we read Mr. Abbott's own statement in full as published in *The Open Court*.

Must we not interpret similar cases that appear extremely mystifying, in the same way that we shall have to interpret Mr. Abbott's statement of the Blake case when we read it in the publication of those who are anxious to find evidences of spirit communication?

It is natural for any man who seeks to communicate with his beloved dead to be in a hypersensitive state. So, for instance, Mr. Clawson is so overwhelmed after having been addressed by a voice that claims to come from his daughter Georgia, that he is obliged to interrupt the seance and give vent to his emotions in tears. It is not likely that under these circumstances he could be critically calm.

We must bear in mind that it is much easier to mystify than to explain a successful mystification. Some mystifications may from their nature be positively beyond an explanation to the individual concerned, and it will be wise for us never to jump at the conclusion that mysticism or occultism or any other theory of a non-scientific nature would offer. Here is an instance for which I can vouch.

A friend of mine, a poet of a delicate and high-strung temperament, Mr. Charles Alva Lane, of whom occultist friends claim that he could easily develop into a sensitive or medium, was once traveling in the South, at a time when psychic phenomena happened to be a common topic in the newspapers. He had just returned to the hotel from a stroll through the streets of the city when he asked for his key at the desk, and became involved in a conversation on telepathy and kindred phenomena with the hotel keeper, a business man of good common sense who was quite skeptical but granted that there "might be something in it." At that moment a messenger boy entered and delivered a telegram. Noticing that it was addressed to Mr. Lane the proprietor at once handed it to my friend who held it between his fingers and said, "Sometimes I feel possessed of a mysterious power which would be difficult to explain, and I may give you a sample of it right now. You see this message, and I suppose the envelope is thick enough so that you can not see through it. Yet if I pause a moment and concentrate my mind on it I feel that I can read the message and describe every detail of the handwriting, signature and so forth."

The hotel keeper shook his head incredulously, but Mr. Lane proceeded to read the telegram slowly word for word and described all particulars as to the lines, hand-writing, and other details, whereupon he handed it to the hotel keeper and requested him to open it. Everything was verified and the evidence of his psychic power was complete.

The case and all the details here stated are beyond doubt, and Mr. Lane would be ready to repeat the statement on oath. The hotel keeper will certainly remain puzzled over the occurrence for the rest of his life—unless he should read this statement of the case and its explanation.

I will now say that Mr. Lane had expected the telegram and had just inquired at the telegraph office when the operator said: "Yes, your telegram has arrived and the boy has taken it to your hotel, but if you like you can read the copy." Mr. Lane did so and re-

turned to the hotel which he reached a short time before the messenger boy arrived. Indeed

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

In insisting upon the principle that we must remain critical and that uncritical reports have to be ruled out, I do not mean to say that either mediums or believers must necessarily be frauds and dupes, for the real reason of the insistency of our belief in a communication with the souls of persons that have passed away from life, is that there is a truth in it. The lives of our ancestors are not wiped out as if they had never been. Their deeds, their words, their aspirations, the examples they set us, remain with us as living memories, and we can know very well what they would advise us to do under certain conditions. Their souls are actually with us and it needs no abnormal imagination to hear their words of warning, their encouragement, their advice, whenever we would need them. Thus their souls are living presences in us and continue to commune with us. This truth may assume the fantastic shape of waking dreams, and in abnormal persons may even be heard as voices, which would sound as if coming from the outside. It is by no means unusual that sensitive people under certain conditions actually believe themselves to be in communion with spirits that address them like objective personages hovering around them, and perhaps assuming visible shape. Auditory and visual hallucinations are nothing uncommon, and though they may often be symptoms of a diseased mind, they not infrequently give expression to the voice of conscience or of subconscious admonitions of deep significance.

The belief in immortality would not have arisen, and would certainly not be so persistent, were it not based upon an important truth. But we insist that while there is spirit there has never as yet been an evidence of the existence of ghosts.* While we often instinctively feel the truth and receive messages through indirect indications which some people have a peculiar knack of interpreting aright; there is no telepathy in the sense of a miraculous transference of thought which would take place without the mediation of symbols or other methods of communication; and religious revelations must be explained analogously.

A serious person who minds the voice of his conscience but was never trained in exact self-observation, is perhaps most liable to be mistaken concerning the inner voice of his convictions, and in

* We have treated the same subject in a previous article entitled "Spirit or Ghost," published in *The Monist*, Vol. XII, pp. 365-403, April, 1902.

case he gives expression to them, being a firm believer in the importance of his mission, he will insist with great assurance upon the objective reality of his message. Thus St. Paul, the Apostle, repeatedly uses such phrases as these: "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 15), or "For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you" (1 Cor. xi. 23), and "that which I have received" (1 Cor. xv. 3), and he insists that he himself and some members of his converts "shall remain alive unto the coming of the Lord," proclaiming then upon the authority of this "word of the Lord," "that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep" (1 Thess. iv. 15), and further down, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Those passages having remained unfulfilled can scarcely be considered as genuine prophecy, and yet we would not for that reason think that the Apostle was a fraud. He felt so sure about this inner voice that he uncritically accepted it as a word of the Lord, and in a similar way we must assume that there are enthusiastic believers in the Beyond who are satisfied even with the semblance of an evidence of their peculiar conception of immortality. They feel that there is a truth in it, and for the sake of the good cause they believe that there is no harm in stretching a statement just a little to make it more emphatic and convincing to others.

As an instance of how little even honest men care for accuracy when in their conception a great cause is at stake, may serve the following sentence, quoted from the autobiography of the well-known occultist, Dr. Franz Hartmann, who in speaking of the phenomena of Madame Blavatsky says:

"If it is true that she occasionally 'helped the spirits' or played some sleight-of-hand trick, I would not criticize her too severely for it; because her only purpose was to induce the people to study the higher laws of life, to raise them up to a higher conception of eternal truth, and teach them to do their own thinking."

In the same way also the incriminating document of Dreyfus was forged by a man who implicitly believed in the guilt of the accused person, and was inspired by the fear that a traitor should escape punishment for a mere technical fault in the law which required an evidence in a case which was so plain that additional proof seemed to him supererogatory.

Much of the evidence in matters of spiritualism is similar. No doubt there is much fraud, and no doubt there are plenty of people

who are anxious to be cheated and are grateful for sham evidence. Moreover it is a lucrative business to pander to the desire of such people. That under these conditions fraud grows rampant is but natural, and considering how easy it is to fall a prey to self-delusion, and how many opportunities there are to produce the slightest mystifications, by mere accident, by cunning, and sometimes by bold guessing, it appears really remarkable that there are not more inexplicable and occult phenomena than can actually be met with, and it is strange that their existence, as we ought to accept it, being granted, the value of the evidence disappears as morning fog in the rays of the rising sun. If now and then an inexplicable residuum remains which would make us believe in the possibility of telepathy or the existence of ghosts, we might comfort ourselves that if we knew the whole case we would smile at our own credulity and like Kant become ashamed of ourselves for having at all deemed the case worthy of a serious investigation.

If telepathy and spirit communication are true we certainly must or ought to be able to produce the phenomena of these peculiar faculties at will by regular experiment, and they would not remain limited to exceptional incidents occurring once in a while without regularity, and only under test conditions.

We do not mean here to attempt explanations of those incidents of the Blake case which Mr. Abbott confesses he is unable to account for. In our opinion they are not so extraordinary as to preclude probabilities which would reduce the mysterious facts to mere stultifications without even throwing any suspicion upon the honesty of the main actors concerned in this case. In some respects it seems to me remarkable that Mrs. Blake (being a regular medium who must be assumed to be acquainted with the business methods of her profession) was not much better posted on the personalities of her visitors and on their relations with the spirit world. The most important feature of this case acknowledged by the leaders of the S. P. R. to be quite remarkable, consists in the fact that an investigator like Mr. Abbott and an authority in the line of mediumistic tricks did not succeed in explaining all, but so far this experience has not made him a believer in mediums, and it would not be difficult to point out several explanations which are possible and would dispel the faintest shadow of mystery.

Behind the Scenes with the Mediums

BY DAVID P. ABBOTT

MANY YEARS AGO two little girls, the Fox Sisters, startled the world with their mysterious rappings. This was the beginning of modern Spiritualism. Soon after this, mediums began appearing all over the country, who could cause raps to sound on furniture, tables to tip, etc. Next, professional mediums began traveling over the country, giving exhibitions in rope-tying and cabinet manifestations. Later came the slate-writing, the billet test mediums, etc., until at the present day there are many hundreds of persons following this profession for a livelihood. There are several hundreds of them in Chicago alone.

In the present work, Mr. Abbott has given to the public a collection of the most valuable secrets of mediumistic work in existence. Never before in the history of Spiritualism have such valuable secrets been made public. Many secrets of the kind have from time to time appeared in books on the subject; but heretofore the mediums, and the dealers in secrets for the use of mediums,

Behind the Scenes with the Mediums

have succeeded in keeping out of print their most valuable secrets.

Most of the secrets revealed in this book were obtained by Mr. Abbott directly from mediums, while he purchased not a few of them from dealers at exorbitant prices. He has given his very best secrets in this work; and being a practical performer himself, although not a medium, he has included only up-to-date secrets that are thoroughly professional and practical and such as are actually being used by professional performers and mediums of the present day, in mystifying an innocent public.

For the magician and performer this book is invaluable, while for the honest spiritualist it is a boon long needed. Honest believers in Spiritualism do not desire to be duped by impostors and charlatans. In this book many tricks of such persons are so thoroughly exposed, that by studying its pages any one may become a competent investigator of any phenomenon of a super-normal appearance.

That the reader may understand how the secrets herein revealed have been treasured and guarded from the public heretofore, and of the value placed on them by performers, we will state that the value of the secrets

Behind the Scenes with the Mediums

contained in this volume estimated at the prices charged for them by dealers, would run into hundreds of dollars. Not a few of the secrets contained have sold at twenty-five dollars each, while a number of them have never even been offered for sale. The little chapter on "Vest Turning" contains a secret that is being sold to-day for two dollars and fifty cents, while the secret contained in the chapter, "Performances of the Annie Eva Fay Type" was sold to a medium of Mr. Abbott's acquaintance for two hundred and fifty dollars.

Many of the slate tricks are worth at least ten dollars each, and the book is very complete in its exposure of slate-writing and billet work. The exposure of the billet tests of certain Chicago mediums of the present day is of great value. It is impossible to enumerate here all the valuable secrets which this work contains. Owing to the bearing of the subject on the question of personal immortality, the work has a certain philosophical import; and in addition to this, descriptions are presented in a very interesting manner.

Mr. Abbott is a member of the American Society for Psychical Research and has written on the subject for the *Journal* of that society.

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By DAVID P. ABBOTT

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