

The Facts and Fallacies of Modern Spiritism.

Written by J. Godfrey Raupert, K.S.G., for Central Bureau Press Bulletin.

Continued.
II.

The second fallacy contained in Sir Conan Doyle's argument is his assumption that the spirits of the seance-room are the spirits of the dead who have proved their identity. To the student, unacquainted with the intricacies of the subject, the evidence presented in support of this claim will seem strong; but it is nevertheless utterly worthless and proves nothing of the kind. It falls to the ground entirely when it is borne in mind that we have cases on record in which similar striking evidence of identity was given but in which the spirit, caught in a falsehood, finally himself confessed that he was not what he had claimed to be.

A single instance of this kind shows how complex the problem is and what sources of information must be at the disposal of these spirits—how difficult, if not impossible, it is to prove their identity. All experienced spiritists are fully alive to this immense difficulty and have striven by various devices to overcome it; but so far they have not been successful. The question of identity is still the bitter cross of psychical research, and Sir Conan Doyle must be aware of it. It is his "will to believe" which causes him to pass over it so lightly. It is wonderful how this "will to believe" blinds the mind and perverts the judgment. Although it is well known and admitted that the spirits habitually impersonate the living, each individual experimenter tries to persuade himself that his particular spirits are doing nothing of the kind. It is often only after many months and even years that the deception is discovered and that the disillusionment comes. In one of his works the late Mr. Stainton-Moses, for many years the leader of the English spirits and a highly educated man, admitted that "all the information ever given him in proof of the presence of the departed might, in harmony with his experience of the Spirits, have been first obtained and then imparted by a false intelligence." Prof. L. P. Jacks of Oxford, President of the British Psychical Research Society in 1917 and personally a high authority on the subject, made this statement in his presidential address: "Take the question of imposture. Mediums are not the only impostors. How about the communicators? Are they masquerading? You can have no absolute proof that there is no imposture on the other side. I think that the whole meaning of personal identity needs to be very carefully thought out and considered before we begin to produce evidence in favor of personal identity." I had myself a striking experience of this kind of spirit-impersonation many years ago. A spirit claiming to be a departed personal friend of mine and intimately acquainted with that individual's life-history, was, after many months, discovered in a falsehood and then freely and boastfully admitted that he had managed to trick us so successfully by drawing the information required from our own sub-conscious memories.

Indeed, the evidence available today fully demonstrates the fact that the main sources of information of these spirits are the sub-conscious minds of the living, although it cannot be claimed that these are their only sources of information. They have probably access to knowledge by methods wholly unknown to us and quite beyond our power of imagination. I have dealt with this aspect of the subject very fully in some of my books. The circumstance that Sir Conan Doyle regards the presentation of intimate knowledge respecting some deceased personality as evidence of identity goes to prove how very imperfectly acquainted he is with the subject. The cases he cites in his articles are too briefly stated to admit of a critical examination and judgment; but I am convinced that they all find an adequate explanation in the activities of his own subconscious mind and in the sources of information at the disposal of these astute beings. I am persuaded that no informed and unbiased student of the subject would regard any one of them as furnishing proof of identity. What has probably impressed the reader of his articles most of all is the evidence supposed to be furnished by photography. "In two cases," he tells us, "the figures of the deceased lads have appeared beside the mothers in a photograph." But this is, as a matter of fact, the weakest and most worthless evidence of all. Their figures are not the individuals they claim to be but mind-images taken from the memories of the living and exteriorized and clothed with subtle matter by the spirit-intelligences.

This is amply proved by the striking evidence which is available. Some years ago the deceased British Cardinals were very much in evidence in English seance-rooms. The late Cardinal Newman especially was believed to appear regularly at a house well known to me. I was several times present at his materialisation and have seen many post mortem photographs of him. But I found that they all differed very considerably and that this difference could be traced back to the image of the late Cardinal which the individual observer had in his mind, or to a published photograph of him which he had seen. They could not therefore be presentations of the Cardinal as he exists now in the other life and in his "spirit body." We have furthermore photographs in which the materialised spirit is presented at various ages—in one case a child or youth, in another as a grown up person, the presentation evidently corresponding with the peculiar mind-image which the experimenter had of the deceased. I have in my possession a photograph obtained in a city which I had never visited before and in which there appears by my side a fairly good picture of a deceased member of my family, but alas, for Sir Conan Doyle and his theories! there is on the same photograph also the image of a person well known to me who is still living, but not as she is now—an elderly lady, but as I knew her years ago, and as I best remember her—a young married woman. Proof positive this, surely! that these images are not photographs of the living dead, but materialised phantasms taken from the sub-conscious memories of relatives and friends. The masquerading spirits clearly cannot always distinguish the phantasms of the living from those of the dead, and it is here where the critical investigator gets on the track of the deception.

Space does not permit me to carry the argument any further; but sufficient has been said to show that Sir Conan Doyle's evidence in favor of the identity of the communicating spirits is utterly worthless, and that his prodigious claim harbors a fundamental and fatal fallacy.

To be continued.

Fifteen Years Ago

From No. 4 of St. Peters Bote

Under date of March 8th, 1904 the publishers of the paper inform their readers that owing to the want of a suitable printing press at Rosthern and other annoying circumstances, the St. Peters Bote will for some time to come be published at Winnipeg, Man., and will also be mailed from there; but the office remains in Rosthern to which all communications should be addressed.—Trains between Regina and Prince Albert have lately come most irregularly. They arrived in Rosthern at any hour of the day or night. This could easily be remedied if in place of the coffee-mills, they would purchase a few real locomotives.—A Rosthern correspondent writes to the paper under date of Feb. 24, that on that day they were having splendid weather. Thermometer showed 15 above zero. The sun shone warmly; the day was bright and clear, with scarcely no wind.—To day arrived Mr. Theodore Weiers and his son from New Prague, Minn. Both have homesteads in Township 38, Range 23. Mr. Weiers intends to at once erect a small house on his homestead; the rest of the family will follow in March. He brings all his cattle and farm machinery with him, likewise a threshing machine.—Leofeld will soon have a fine new bell, and then will this up-to-now wild prairie resound with the sweet tones of the Angelus bell to gladden the heart of every good German Catholic. It is to be paid for out of voluntary contributions made by the colonists.—Jac. Merkling and Joh. Theod. Gransch of Leofeld were, in town to-day and bought several fat hogs at 7c live-weight.—When Frank Green sr. arrived here last spring to settle in Leofeld, he was sick; likewise his wife. He is now as healthy as in his younger days; his wife has also recovered her health. To-day he is in town to buy lumber for a granary that he intends to erect on his homestead.—Jac. Eull of Leofeld was in town to get household supplies and fodder for his cattle.—The two sons-in-law of Fred Imhoff, Jos. Daniels and Anton Wurm, came in from Leofeld to-day to haul out store goods for their father-in-law.

APPENDIX: During this winter the whole of that territory which is now designated as Dead Moose Lake, Piiger, Fulda, Willmont, Carmel and south, Humboldt and St. Scholastica's, was served by Father Chrysostom, O. S. B. Services in Dead Moose Lake and at "Kreitzenbeck's" or "St. Joe" were held every second week. At Dead Moose Lake on Sundays (for instance March 6th and 20th); at first in the house of Lawrence Lindberg, later on in his store; until at last on Christmas Day 1903 services could be held in the little log church, just barely completed around midnight previously. On the other side of the Lake the services were held Mondays in the house of Wm. Kreitzenbeck; Father Chrysostom driving over from "Lindberg's". For a time during the winter these services on the other side of the Lake fell away, owing to the establishment of a new mission at Gottfried Schaefer's, S. 28, T. 37, R. 23. He read Mass, however, a few times on the west side in several different places, i. e. at Carl Juergen's, S. 34, T. 38, R. 23, and at Jac. Schomische's a few miles further west.—Pioneer days are hard on pastor and flock. It being forbidden to keep the Blessed Sacrament in places where no priest resides during the week, Holy Communion can not be distributed outside of Holy Mass. All confessions would have to be heard

before the missionary could commence to say Mass. Frequently it was close to the noon hour when services began, and long after the noon hour before the services, comprising Holy Mass and Sacrament, would be over. Then would come a few baptisms, catechetical instructions to the little ones, and finally, at times as a wind up, a "hot" parish meeting. Somewhere around 1:30 P. M. the priest would have an opportunity to take his first morsel of food on that day. His troubles for the day are, however, not yet finished; now comes the six or seven hour's drive to his next mission, or homeward, as the case might be, in wind and rain, or if in winter time, at forty and more degrees below zero, and then at the end perhaps a bed on the floor or ground. Such kind of work might be his lot for nearly an entire week at a stretch, with an occasional sick-call, in the most remote corner of his territory, thrown in for good measure.

Household Hints

Canning Fresh Meat for Summer

Instead of smoking or curing the surplus meat killed in winter, it may be kept fresh for summer use by canning in ordinary household canning jars. This can be done in any home. The meat needs to be boiled or roasted for half an hour and then cut into pieces convenient for putting into the jars. The bone, gristle and excessive fat are removed. After the jars are packed, they are filled with boiling water, the covers put on loosely and set into a boiler with a slat bottom that keeps the jars from touching the boiler bottom. Then the jars are boiled, 5 hours for beef, 4 hours for pork or chicken. After removing the covers of the jars should be tightened.

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