

TOLD BY A TRAP DOOR.

A MESSAGE THAT SUCCEEDED BUT SPOILED A BELIEVER.

Kellar's Little Trick to Bring a Friend's Father to His Son—Message From the Spirit Land—A Warning to Sell the Farm and Buy Mining Stock.

Kellar, the magician, occasionally performs feats in a private way that are no more interesting perhaps than his stage performances, but possess a singular quality of human interest. For instance, a young man came to him not very long and said that his father had fallen so completely under the influence of a certain spiritualistic medium that he would transact no business without advice from the spirit land, and it was feared that the old man was going to bring destruction upon himself through his serious attention to the ghosts. Some time ago, the son said, the heavenly guides had advised their worshippers to invest in some mining stocks of doubtful character, and he had declared that he would take the pointer. The son was greatly alarmed, and he had come to Kellar to learn if by means of the magician's talent the venerable dupe's faith could not be shaken in these shades that came so good-naturedly from the land of the unknown to advise him in everything from the value of mining securities to the best type of bicycle. The possessors of the heavenly truths conveyed their meanings to the old man in messages written upon ordinary slates. The story aroused Kellar's sympathy, and he arranged a scheme to thwart the spirits and deprive them of their pious old victim.

The son departed happy, and upon meeting his father said:

"Father, I have discovered a new medium who is a peach. All your friends are not in it with this one. He communes with the spirits every minute of his life, and he knows every move they make. Slate writing? Why, that fellow can just blot at a slate and the spirits will cover it with solemn advice in seven languages."

The father rejoiced at the discovery of his son, and he gladly accepted an invitation to attend a seance for the new medium and get some more advice from heaven.

Thereupon the son simply informed Kellar that his father's name was Andrew, that his mother's name was Susan, and that the name of his sister was Susan. Equipped with these meagre but satisfactory data, Kellar prepared a campaign against the spirits.

An appointed hour found the old man, his son, and a friend of Kellar's—there by special invitation to witness the performance—seated in the library of the magician's home. Across the knees of the old man lay a bundle of a dozen new slates, which he had brought. Presently Kellar made his entrance, and without any delay proceeded to the business of the occasion. Stripping the library table of its lamps, books, and covering, he remarked casually that the moquette carpet of the room would probably interfere somewhat with the magnetic control of the spirits, but that he thought he could manage the ghosts all right. At his request, they examined the tables, and, failing to find any satanic device about it, they took seats. Kellar instructed them to draw their chairs close to the table. The old man sat opposite the magician; the son and the friend were at either end. The room was brilliantly illuminated, and remained so throughout the seance. After a pause, Kellar spoke in a low tone cautioning the others to remain perfectly quiet, to make no remarks, and to ask no questions until the spirits had an opportunity to manifest themselves.

In making these preliminary arrangements, Kellar's manner was solemn and mystic, his face was inscrutable, while his eyes swept from one to another of the party in those stern and challenging glances which somehow make all victims of mediums feel meek and utterly incapable of doing anything so offensive as to oppose a fraud. They were of many kinds and sizes, some in plain wooden frames, some in the decorated borders which school children admire. Picking up a small slate the wood of which was stamped with figures, letters, and drawings of animals, the magician asked the men to extend their hands one over the other, to the centre of the table. A little stack of six hands having been made, Kellar placed his long slim left hand on top of the stack. With his right hand he thrust the slate under the table, keeping his thumb always in sight, however, just above the edge of the table. There was another moment of stillness. Opposite the magician sat the old man, motionless and awed, his eyes upon the pale face of the pretended medium.

Presently Kellar drew the slate from beneath the table. All eyes were instantly upon it. However, it was still perfectly blank. Kellar eyed it wistfully and in a tone of disappointment whispered:

"The spirits are a trifle slow this evening."

Again he thrust the slate under the table always keeping his thumb in sight. In less than ten seconds he said: "Let us look again!" When the slate came into view it was found to be covered on both sides with writing, done in a hand too fine for any human being to have inscribed it in such a brief period. Moreover the writ-

ing was in seven languages, Japanese, Greek, Hindoostanee, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Navajo Indian. The old man had no knowledge of Japanese, nor Greek, nor Hindoostanee, nor Arabic, nor Chinese, nor Russian, nor Navajo Indian, but this exhibition so paralyzed him that he didn't ask for a translation.

"Thunder," he whispered excitedly to his son, "this beats anything I ever saw!" "Didn't I tell you so," replied the young man. "He's a daisy! Shut up now and wait for the next act."

Kellar presently addressed the aged victim:

"Please select a slate and write upon it the name of some friend who has passed to the other side of life."

The old gentleman picked out a slate, and writing a name upon it laid the written side downward and slid it across the table to Kellar. Taking it between thumb and finger the magician slid it under the table as before while the company again stacked hands in the centre. Kellar said that the hand part of the programme was a condition imposed by the spirits to perfect the magnetic harmony and concentrate the atmospheric thought currents which otherwise would seriously interfere with the travel of the shades and make a mobilization of any particular force of spiritual intellect next to impossible.

The magician presently drew forth the slate, and again it was blank. He murmured in chagrin and thrust it back once more. Immediately the scratching of a slate pencil could distinctly be heard and in a very few moments three hollow raps sounded. When Kellar brought forth the slate, it bore these words:

"Dear friends: We are happy to be able to send you a message through the mediumship of our dear brother. Tell Andrew that we are overjoyed in his faith, that his loved ones are guiding his every step. We are a powerful band and will not let him go astray. He cannot feel us, but we touch and embrace him every day. If he could only penetrate the thin veil there is between us he would see John, Martha, and Susan standing over him. God bless you all."

The old man's emotion upon receiving this message was very great. He had not altogether expected that the medium could corral his own departed ones from the infinite spaces of the universe. In a voice hoarse with feeling he requested that this question should be propounded:

"Shall I mortgage the farm and invest in the mining stocks?"

Almost at once the slate was brought back with this answer:

"Do so, by all means." Transported by this proof of the case and devotion of the spirits, the old man leaned heavily against the table. But at this moment a vivid flash of lightning filled the room, blinding the eyes with its white shivering brilliancy and stunning the company with astonishment. When the illumination became normal there were but men at the table. The medium had vanished.

All but one of the slates were gone. Upon this was written:

"The flash of light which has just dazzled you will be the means of revealing twenty-four hours that what you have seen and experienced here to-night is not the work of spirits, but of a fellow mortal."

"HARRY KELLAR."

At the door stood a grave servant who indicated the exit with one calm gesture. The company arose and groped their way toward the street. The old man went first and after him his son. As Kellar's friend was about to step across the threshold the form of a magician appeared, motioning to him from an alcove, and then over coffee and cigars Kellar told the story of the seance supply house, where he purchased a collection of the different kinds of slates manufactured in the United States.

These slates he placed in the room under the table, first covering several of them with writing in the seven different languages. Then the preparations were all complete with the exception of a rehearsal with Barney, his chief assistant. The cues were thoroughly understood between the magician and his silent and cool-headed accomplice. The seance commenced. Kellar picked out a slate which was an exact duplicate of one of those upon which he had written. This he holds under the table as described. Withdrawing it to see if the spirits had written he hastily pushes it back with the remark that the spirits were a trifle slow that evening. This is Barney's cue.

Underneath on a temporary scaffold the counterfeit spirit unrolls the tray, thrusts his master's hand, drawing it through the trap he picks out its duplicate from the collection which has been prearranged, and deftly, without a sound, places it under the fingers ready to receive it. Immediately the bogus medium exhibits the slate written in strange languages as described. The piercing glow of mysterious light was a magnesium flash operated by the magician's photographer hidden behind the curtains, who made an exposure of the scene at the moment when Barney was passing up the last slate. Kellar had all hands extended to the centre of the table, not for the purpose of centralizing the magnetism but to draw all eyes over the table and prevent any possibility of Barney's arm being seen.

Within forty-eight hours after this affair a photograph was in the old man's possession. It was a very good portrait of Barney passing up a slate upon which was written advice from the sky. That ended the old man's belief in spiritualism.

TO ATTRACT WILD BIRDS.

If You Want Them About Your House, Plant a White Mulberry Tree.

If you live in a suburban town and want to encourage wild birds to visit and live about your home," the observant Jerseyman says, "you cannot make advances to them in a better way than by planting a white mulberry tree and abolishing cats."

"The first thing to attend to is to get rid of all the cats which come about your grounds. You can do this while your mulberry tree is growing, but don't take too long about it, for the white mulberry is one of the quickest growing trees that I know of. Originally it came from China, and was brought to this part of the country about fifty years ago, when there was a craze for raising silk worms. Since that time it has been neglected, but there are many places like my own where it is common upon the Shrewsbury river where it has found a congenial soil and climate and now grows wild."

"I have one white mulberry tree. Five years ago it was only about six feet tall, but now it is thirty feet tall, and its handsome globe-like head has a diameter of about twenty-five feet. It is a pretty tree, with its shiny leaves and its close foliage, and makes a shelter which the birds love; but it is when the fruit ripens that the tree becomes the strongest drawing attraction for them. The fruit is not very sweet, but it is an inch long and mawkishly sweet to our human taste, but these seem to be hardly one of our small native birds that does not love it. The fruit began to ripen about June 15 this year, and ever since then there hasn't been a minute of the day when there wasn't at least one bird in the tree. To one who is not conversant with the great variety of our native birds it is a revelation to watch them come after a taste of the sweet fruit. There are catbirds and robins, sparrows of more kinds than you have fingers and toes, warblers and vireos, and even hummingbirds. The fruit will last until about July 10 or 15."

"The white mulberry furnishes another source of delight to the birds, which is not so much a matter of pleasure to its owner. This is because its leaves are exceedingly good beyond the great caterpillars, and particularly to the tent caterpillars. The elder, the mulberry, and the apple tree are favorites of the worm. I have some colonies of caterpillars on my mulberry tree, but I take to the same birds which eat the fruit, the worms are also soon eaten, and not a single colony of the worms has so far got beyond the wig it originated upon before its members were snuffed up as choice morsels by the colony of birds."

"And do you have English sparrows?" "Certainly: a large flock of them. They live in the wistaria vines and nest under the eaves of the barn."

"And do they not drive away the other birds?" "No, nor do I believe that they have done so anywhere. It is true that there are now many places where none of our native birds is left, and that in these same places the English sparrows abound, and this has given rise to a belief that the other birds have been driven away by them; but I have never seen the native birds driven by them. On my little place they all exist together and in harmony. The robins are more quarrelsome than the English sparrows. I believe that it would be found that where the native birds have disappeared it was the result of other causes, and that the English sparrows remained simply because they do not mind things which would drive all the wild birds far off. People and cats and lack of shade and fruit are potent reasons for the departure of the wild birds, cats especially."

Cortice and the World's Fair.

The Chicago World's Fair medals and diplomas have at length been distributed, much to the gratification, we may be assured, of the owners who are entitled to receive them. Mr. W. H. Wyman, manager of the Corticelli Silk Co., at St. John's yesterday received through the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, the medal and diploma awarded to their company. The medal is of bronze, enclosed in an aluminum case, and we presume it is similar to all the medals issued at the great fair. The diploma is a large and handsome steel engraving, and under the ordinary heading contains the following special reward:

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H. J. KIMBALL, ELLA E. LANE BOWEN, Pres. Department Com. Individual Judge. This is certainly very emphatic and gratifying testimony of the excellent, if not indeed almost perfect quality of the silk manufactured by the Corticelli Silk Company in St. John's, and it is all the more significant from the fact that the award was not made until after the most careful scrutiny and repeated tests and examinations. The Corticelli Silk Company is one of the most successful enterprises in Canada, and the impartial endorsement as to the quality of its output will, no doubt, be sure to enhance it still further in public estimation.

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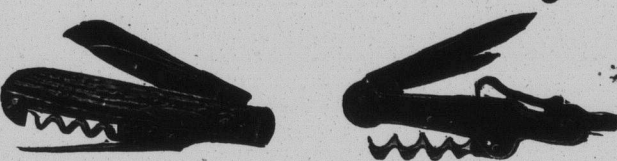
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