

MEDIUM TRAPPED BY ELECTRIC LIGHT

First Claimant of Scientific American \$5,000 Prize Detected in Test

Result Told Prematurely by Houdini, One of the Expert Watchers, Who Says He Made No Promise of Secrecy.

(New York Times.) Harry Houdini, president of the Society of American Magicians, called up The New York Times by telephone yesterday and denounced as "an outright fake" alleged spirit manifestations by George Valentin, spiritualistic medium of Wilkes-Barre, which he and other members of a special test committee observed at a seance arranged by The Scientific American at its offices in the Woolworth Building last Wednesday night. Houdini then proceeded to tell what happened at the seance, at which a Times reporter was present. By agreement, the results of the test have not hitherto been published.

J. Malcolm Bird, associate editor of the Scientific American, said last night that while the statements made by Houdini about the incidents of the last seance was substantially correct, Houdini's revelations were made without authority and in violation of an understanding shared by all members of the committee which managed the tests that none of the result should be made public until authorization was given by the Scientific American.

"And please say," added Mr. Bird, "that Mr. Houdini is through right now as a member of that committee and make it plain that he is through because he has violated that understanding. Houdini's reason for making his statements was, as he explained, that he had been taunted by his friends for 'being such a simpleton' as to take any part in the seance proceedings, and he could not permit his friends to believe that he was convinced of its genuineness. He asserted that he attended

the demonstration under no restriction. Valentin is the first of the recognized mediums of the United States to try to win the \$5,000 prize offered by The Scientific American to any one who can produce genuine manifestations of psychic phenomena. He met a selected group of expert observers in a room of the Scientific American hung with black draperies to shut out the light

but equipped with various ingenious devices to detect fraud. Here is Houdini's story of the result:

Houdini's Story of the Test.

"The man came there to win the \$5,000 prize, and we had agreed to act like a lot of bores to see what his game was. I went there at the invitation of the Scientific American and I felt at liberty to tell just what happened. There was no string tied to my invitation and I was not pledged to secrecy, although there has been an awful lot of reliance on the part of those who were present.

"The chairs of the judges were arranged in a circle, with the chairs of the medium and his assistant in the middle of the circle. The chairs in which the medium and his assistant sat were rigged with electrical contacts, so that when the medium got out of chair, the contacts were established, and excited an electric light in an adjoining room. "In the adjoining room sat other observers, including a young woman stenographer who, as I understand it, listened through a dictaphone which indicated whether the 'spirit' voice of the medium or his helper originated at the center of the circle or whether one or the other sat or came from some part of the room.

"While the seance was in progress the test lights in the adjoining room repeatedly came up, proving that the medium had left his chair—for instance, probably at the moment when Mr. Munn of the Scientific American was whacked on the nose with the end of the trumpet and lost his glasses. The girl in the adjoining room kept a stop watch and recorded the time of each word spoken by the medium in the guise of a spirit. It was simple enough to check the time the medium spent in his chair by the lights in the adjoining room and the stop watch and the dictaphone furnished whatever else was needed in the way of evidence showing that the medium had to leave his chair before the spirits could tap the judges on the knees or wave a trumpet over their heads.

"Get, I got an awful clout on the head," continued Houdini. "And ever since they learned that I was one of the judges, my friends who have read stories about the 'seance' have been asking me whether I was such a simpleton and a fool to believe all that bunk.

"I never saw such awkward work in all my life. Yet that medium had made a statement, which he asked me to believe, that he had often been lifted off the floor by spirits, and that the spirits had placed him on a table. He got off that bunk before he started his performance.

"And we said, 'Is that so?' and 'How remarkable!' and 'Can you just imagine a thing like that?' That man thought he had us fooled.

"There wasn't a chance at any time that this magician fooled us. I think these people ought to be put in jail for preying on the most sacred of human emotions." Says His Mind Is Open.

Houdini was asked if he believed in spiritualism. "I am willing to believe," he replied, "but of all I have seen I have never found anything that couldn't be explained by human effort. My mind is open. I am a human being, and I would like to get in touch with them if it were possible."

He was asked if he had any faith in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's psychic pictures and other evidence supporting spiritualism. Houdini explained that Sir Arthur was one of the guests invited to a magic dinner given by the Society of American Magicians a year ago, at which Sir Arthur mystified many of the magicians and their guests with an exhibition of motion pictures of dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals

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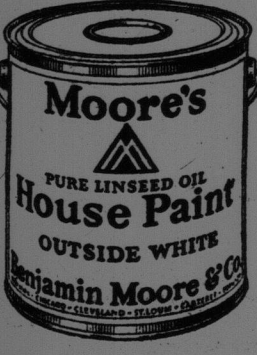


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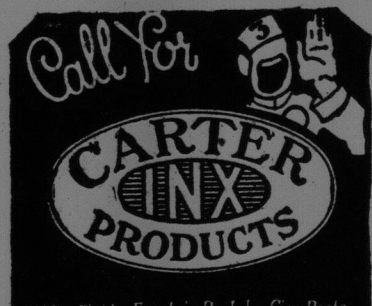
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FREDERICKTON PERSONALS

(Frederickton Gleaner.) Miss Jennie Woods and her niece, Miss Alice Ladd, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Ladd, of this city, will leave tomorrow night for Everett, Washington, where they will make their home with Miss Woods' sister, Mrs. H. W. White.

Miss Kathleen Rowan of Lincoln and Miss Ethel Sweeney of South Devon are to leave this evening for Philadelphia where they will enter hospital to train as nurses.

Miss Ethel Rainsford, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. LeBaron Bull, for some time, has gone to New York, where she will engage in social service work in connection with Trinity Church.

Donald MacDonald, of the staff of the Bank of Montreal, in this city, has been transferred to Toronto. Mr. Geldert of Amherst has been transferred to the bank here.

A very enjoyable family reunion was held last evening at the home of Mrs. Christina McFarlane, Nashua, in honor of her brother, John S. White, who has been visiting her for some time and who will leave this week for his home in Connecticut.

TOO MANY APPLICANTS?

Frederickton Gleaner.—Applications for Normal School Entrance Examinations are being received at the Education Office in large numbers and present indications are that the total number will be in excess of last year. The new regulations, adopted by the Board of Education recently, limiting the total number who will be admitted to the Normal School to 400, becomes effective this year and it is believed that the number of applicants will exceed this total.

REFUSES RAISE IN SALARY, THINKS HE WILL NOT EARN IT

Boston, June 1.—In a letter received by the Waltham board of recreation, John L. Leary, athletic instructor at the high school and supervisor of playgrounds in the city, refused a proffered raise of \$250 a year in pay. He gave as his reason for the refusal the fact that he intends to take a course of physical culture instruction at the Harvard summer school this season and will not be able to devote as much time as usual to his work, and so thought he was underestimating of the value of his services. Leary was formerly with the St. Louis Browns and is well known locally in athletics.

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