

ST. BENEDICT, Founder of the Great Benedictine Order.

(Feast March 21.)

He left his home, his all and e'en forborne
To sip at learning's fountain; all but truth
And truth is God. He would return no more,
For Rome's deep mires appalled his stainless youth.

Then, searching for a hermit's silent home,
Addressed his steps to Subiaco's cave;
Forgotten were the fleshpots left at Rome
And sweet, the bread the toiling peasant gave.

How brief the solitude the hermit craved!
Repute, too eager, brought him forth again.
Alas! a holy rule brooks not a life depraved;
The father went but found unruly men.

And next on Mount Cassino's lofty side
He sowed the seed which, sprouting upwards, went
To vine, that spread its myriad branches wide,
And curled its tendrils round the Occident.

Thy work, O Saint, so long ago begun
In zeal and greatness claims its prestige still;
While there's a soul to save, 'tis yet undone,
And while there's soil of youthful minds to till.

U. J. Schnitzhofer

The Facts and Fallacies of Modern Spiritism.

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

Continued.

III.

The third fallacy contained in Sir Conan Doyle's reasoning is his confident assertion that spirit-intercourse, by means of mediumship, will prove of immense benefit to mankind, especially at a time of exceptional distress such as the present. This note of confidence pervades all his recent writings. He speaks of "miracles in the form of psychic phenomena happening every day" and of the "tidings of great joy" which they are proving to many. These statements will no doubt lead many a reader to conclude that these phenomena are dropping down from heaven as gifts from God upon a distracted world and at a time of its bitter need. But a greater misconception of the real facts of the case cannot be imagined. The phenomena spoken of never occur spontaneously, but they are invited and invoked and for their occurrence the initiative has to be taken on the human side—by means of the entranced medium, the passive mind, the circle properly constituted etc. They have, therefore, nothing whatever in common with the miracles recorded in the Gospels. And there are high scientific authorities who are not at all convinced that the beings responding to these invitations are at any time the spirits of the dead.

But I will assume, for argument's sake, that this is really the case—that occasionally at least the spirits of departed human beings manifest by these means. We are then, however, inevitably forced to the conclusion that they must be spirits of the lowest and most debased order—cheats and liars and hypocrites, from contact with whom every right-minded man should abstain. Readers of the preceding article will have seen that it is, under the most favorable conditions, impossible to be certain of the identity of the communicators and that, in countless instances, endless misery, disappointment and disillusionment await the enquirer. Experienced spiritists say that "even where the most convincing proofs have been given we must be cautious." "I gained the distinct impression," writes Dr. Hereward Carrington, a purely scientific investigator, "that instead of the spirits of the personages who claimed to be present, I was dealing with an exceedingly sly, cunning, tricky and deceitful intelligence which threw out chance remarks, fishing guesses, and shrewd inferences, leaving the sitter to pick them up and elaborate them if he would. If any thing could make me believe in the doctrine of evil and lying spirits it would be the sittings with Mrs. Piper."

But apart from the question as to the real nature of these spirits, around which a fierce controversy will beyond doubt be turning shortly, I maintain that no departed human being who has preserved his moral and intellectual integrity in the other world would adopt means so disastrous to the living as modern mediumship is known to be—purely for conveying the most trivial messages to surviving friends. It is here where the real difficulty lies and where deluded scientists are most certainly not telling the whole truth to the public. For what are the actual facts of the case? I will, lest I be suspected of religious bias, let experienced and well-known authorities speak. Respecting the physical effects of the practice of mediumship Sir Wm. Crookes writes: "After witnessing the painful state of nervous and bodily prostration in which some of these experiments have left Mr. Home—after seeing him lying in almost fainting condition on the floor, pale and speechless—I could scarcely doubt that the evolution of psychic force is accompanied by a corresponding drain on vital force." Mr. Stainton-Moses, claimed by the spiritists all over the world as the highest authority on the subject, wrote of himself as follows: "The hand tingled and the arm throbbed and I was conscious of waves of force surging through me. When the message was done I was prostrate with exhaustion and suffered from a violent headache at the base of the brain." Dr. Von Schrenck-Notzing, a scientific experimenter of recent date, tells us that "as a rule it took the medium two days to recover from the nervous prostration resulting from these sittings." And Sir Wm. Barrett assures us repeatedly that he has observed "the steady downward course of all mediums who sit regularly." I need not say that my long and many-sided acquaintance with the subject and reports I am constantly receiving from shipwrecked experimenters, confirm the literal truth of these statements.

Respecting the moral effects of these spirit-communications the half has never yet been told: I mean to tell the whole of it, however, before I have done with the subject. I will here but quote the statement of one disillusioned spiritist: "The subject, strange to say, he writes, 'seemed to have the power of introducing discord in every family in which it entered, of arraying husband against wife in the divorce court, and of producing all manner of domestic infelicity and sexual irregularities. This is

rather a strange result of the belief that we are surrounded by the spirits of our beloved dead who see all we do!"

But Sir Conan Doyle speaks of automatic writing as "perhaps the most satisfactory means of communication." He must know something of the dangers attending it because he tells his readers, in a vague sort of way, that this kind of thing "can be overdone." The well-established fact, of course, is that this apparently harmless form of communication is the most dangerous one of all. For while this writing, in its various forms, can be readily induced and progressively developed, it cannot be so easily shut off. In most instances the experimenter ultimately becomes the victim of the power which he called into operation, that power, by the incessant and maddening prompting itself, disclosing itself as anything but a kindly relative or friend.

I have never ceased to draw attention in my writings to this peril and I have invariably illustrated my assertion by accounts of actual and most painful occurrences. I will here let an authority speak who has never committed himself to any religious belief and who writes purely as a scientific man. "I know this progressive development well," writes Dr. Carrington. "I have so many different accounts sent me from different sources that I know each step of the process perfectly. First slow scrawls and scratches obtained with difficulty and only after long waiting; then the formation of definite letters; then the more rapid flow of the hand writing with intelligent connexion; then personal remarks, answers, conversations, lies, impertinence; then the stage in which it seems hardly necessary for the subject to touch the board at all; then the board is discarded altogether and a pencil is substituted in its place. The writing now becomes still more personal, the subject begins to be dominated by it. Then, if the subject still continues, rapidly—furiously rapid writing takes place; pain develops at the base of the brain; then the pencil is discarded and writing is performed with any object which is handy—a fork, a paper knife, etc., or with the fingers in the air; finally the subject seems to 'intuit' the words before they are written out; this becomes more and more intense until distinct auditory hallucinations result; the patient listens to the internal voices and follows and believes what they say: she loses sleep; insomnia sets in; a strange light is seen in her eyes; all sense of proportion is lost; the subject is completely wrapped up in the internal voices and pays but little attention to external affairs; she is completely dominated or obsessed by the internal reverie; to all intents and purposes she has become insane." "I doubt not that many hundreds of persons become insane every year by reason of these experiments with the planchette board."

In view of such a statement as this based upon wide experience and dictated by no religious prepossession, one can but ask this question: Will any sane person maintain that spirit-intercourse by means of automatic writing or of any other form of mediumship can ever under any circumstances be conceived to prove a blessing to mankind?

To be continued.

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Rev. W. BRABENDER

From the Mission

SECHLT, B. C., March

My Dear Father Prior:—

Cold and disagreeable storms last week, beat warm sunshine yesterday and probably for a few more, these are the weather conditions here at present. The moon has brought us spring lets are blooming, hazel blossoming, the air is getting warmer. I wished my friends the prairies could enjoy an old-fashioned spring were used to from the old. The snow we had last winter the first we saw this winter we have gone through a lot of trouble all the same.

On the 13th of January schoolboy contracted influenza very severe kind; in a few days all the other children followed. Half of the Sisters were not with the disease. We noted Indians of the fact and came back to Sechelt and nursing the children. The wood for the stoves and the did the washing. They watching the children at night. And God was good to us, died with influenza. But the is down with the effect. I am afraid she contracted pneumonia. The disease has its appearance at the school but in a mild form. But attack was the real thing, fortunate circumstance was parents had had real influenza fall, so that they could nursing the little ones. other people that had been before, contracted the disease and one young man a children under school-age it. One little girl was on the right side which quite black, as the father

The school is making to St. Joseph now, as the Ottawa will decide if the ment is going to build a new at Sechelt or not. They are ready to sacrifice their ber on their reserve and of the costs, if Ottawa go other half. Certainly, sacrifice deserves great.

But the Whites too have great sacrifices for the training of their children Columbia. The school the same as in the U.S. the churches are heavily sides. The Holy Rosary in Vancouver has to pay \$4000.00 municipal tax keeps up a parochial school. I regret to say that only a Fathers have parochial their parishes. The children other parishes go to the schools. And that this sphere does its destruction can easily be seen. The churches is taxing religion aim of which is to destroy churches out of existence as possible. I am afraid Catholics are losing ground every day.

Some people wanted to clothes for the children school, but the station not know how to send. Sechelt has no railway. All parcels must go to V. B. C., which is the railway. From there they go to Sechelt on the steamship, please, address the Rev. W. Brabender, Sechelt via Vancouver, B. C. I cover I pay the steamship myself. If there are families in a parish who would send clothes, they had better get together, this would save and steamship charges. Thanks to the kind bene my mission.

Rev. W. BRABENDER