

EUSAPIA PALADINO: HER MYSTIC POWERS

Italian Woman Who Is to Give Seances in America Under Eyes of Scientists—Investigator Describes Her Performances in Naples and Paris—Witnesses Are Utterly Baffled.

One of the most remarkable of modern spiritualistic mediums, Madame Eusapia Paladino, is soon to begin a series of seances in America. While the newspapers are not to be favored with a full account of her seances here, yet a comprehensive idea of her reputed powers, as shown in previous sittings, may be had from an article by Mr. Hereward Carrington in *McClure's Magazine*. Mr. Carrington is a member of the American Society for Scientific Research, and one of the most expert investigators of mediumistic tricks in America. In talking of the seances with Madame Paladino, he confesses himself baffled by facts which are inexplicable "by any theory of fraud or trickery" and certainly "not due to hallucination." Moreover he quotes several eminent scientists as Prof. Lombroso, the late Prof. Curie and Mme. Curie, Camille Flammarion, and Sir Oliver Lodge, as being likewise convinced against their will that Madame Paladino has supernatural psychic powers.

Eusapia Paladino was born in Naples in 1854 of poor parents, and was a poor and uneducated girl until she was about 15 years of age, when she began to give seances. These powers were discovered by accident when attending a seance in Naples. For some years she remained in the city, but in 1888 she was noticed by Prof. Chiala, of Naples, and in 1891 by Prof. Lombroso. Since then she has been a "centre of scientific observation." In his article, Mr. Carrington describes her thus:

"She is of a quiet and retiring disposition, but at the same time is a woman of powerful will, possessing a keen, alert and short, rather plump, and when she has chatted some time, and begins to gain confidence in the good faith of her listeners and investigators, she has a pleasant, even sweet smile which brightens her face frequently. Her hair is grayish brown in color, with the exception of one white lock over her left temple, covering a deep crease in her forehead. During the seances, her remarkable cold breeze issues from this crease."

In the autumn of 1908 Mr. Carrington, with two friends, Edward Feilding and W. M. Brewster, went to Naples and arranged for a series of seances with Mme. Paladino. One of their rooms in the Hotel Victoria was used for the sittings and was fitted up in the following manner:

We improvised a cabinet by hanging two light black curtains across one corner of the room, forming a triangular space some three feet deep. In this cabinet we put a small table, belonging to the hotel, and upon this we placed various musical instruments, such as a tea bell, a tambourine, a tin trumpet, a tin horn, and a tin whistle. These instruments were arranged in the corner of the cabinet, behind the table. We placed a small guitar. The arrangement was varied from time to time, but this was the usual method of disposing of the apparatus.

Eusapia sat in front of the cabinet curtains, from one to two feet distant from them, and was placed in the oblong seance table, upon which she and the rest of us placed our hands. Our stenographer, Mr. Meeson, was seated at a separate table, having a well-shaded lamp of his own. It was his duty to record accurately the passing of time, the nature of the observed phenomena, as dictated by us, and our other remarks, samples of which will be quoted immediately. We had arranged a special means of lighting the seance room, as follows: From the ceiling in the centre of the room hung a four-bulb electric chandelier. Two of these bulbs were white, and two red, varying in intensity through 110, 150, 220 and 240 volts. The brightest of these lights was a regular 16-watt power lamp, the faintest, the dim red light, enabled us to see only

outlines of the room's furniture; but even in this weakest light we could always perceive the medium's hands, her face, her outstretched arms, her body. It is an interesting fact that practically all of our best phenomena were obtained in bright light. Only when the light was much reduced, as it was on a few occasions, did the phenomena become vague, uncertain and unsatisfactory.

During the first three seances (except for the stenographer, who sat at a separate table, and was always visible to us), Mr. Feilding and I were alone present, one of us controlling the right hand and foot, the other controlling the left hand and foot of Eusapia.

Our first seance commenced at 10:25 p.m., but it was not until after 11 that phenomena began. I shall quote a few passages from the detailed reports, illustrating both the character of the phenomena and the method of control, as well as the precaution we took to prevent their production by normal means.

"Complete levitation of the table. E—My hand was on the table, Mme.'s right hand on top of mine, and not touching the table.

C—Medium's left foot did not leave my right. My right hand was across Mme.'s right hand, and at the same time the medium's leg did not come into contact with the leg of the table.

E—There was no possibility of her touching the leg of the table on this side, as the table was completely out into the air, off all four feet.

C—The medium's right hand grasped my left hand firmly, and was over mine, mine between hers and the table.

E—My left foot was pressing strongly on hers.

During the second seance a series of remarkable levitations followed. One of these was particularly striking, and we did not have time to dictate the control of hand and foot after each phenomenon. In spite of our utmost endeavors to prevent the table from being raised, it was raised, and we were held in various ways, it continued to do so. We were partly upon the floor, partly in our chairs, holding hands, feet, knees, ankles, and legs, these levitations, and the certain distance between her skirt and the table leg, her body and the table, and to make other instantaneous measurements, such as the occurrence of the phenomena. The record will indicate this.

11:01 p.m.—The table lifts on the two legs farthest from the medium, both hands being clearly visible, and about a foot away from the table, and her feet being clenched.

C—The control of the feet being the same before, except that my right hand was across Mme.'s right hand, and not touching the table.

E—My right hand is across both her knees.

[The medium sat well back in her chair, and her body was at least nine feet from the table, and clearly visible member the conditions of the striking phenomenon.]

11:05 p.m.—Complete levitation of the table.

C—The table lifts about six inches, only C's and my hands were on the table, clasped across the middle.

Another complete levitation of the table.

E—Nobody's hands are on the table.

Success. She then cut the ropes with the knife, and the battleship at once began to move. As it glided smoothly towards the water the crowds below and the workmen on the great hull cheered delightedly. In a few moments the ship was under way, and the new recruit to the fleet's sea power was afloat. The naval band having played "God Save the King," the ship's crew, for Lady Loreburn, the duchess's admiral, and the constructor, and the people at once began to depart. No sooner had they left the ways than scores of boats were on the water, and through which had passed, their occupants scooping up the great masses of floating grease which had been placed as usual under the cradle to enable the launch to be carried out.

Details of the New Vessel.

Much secrecy is observed by the admiralty authorities as to the details of construction of the vessel. She, however, completed the fourth of the armoured cruisers of the Invincible class. She is the longest warship the world has ever seen, and in point of size, speed, and radius of action, an advance on her predecessor of the same class.

There is practically a difference of 2,000 tons between the Indefatigable and the earlier units of the group, and she is regarded as being a considerable improvement upon her forerunners. There is no equally marked advance in her armaments, but it is thought that she will carry more powerful anti-torpedo equipment than her sister ships. Though great secrecy is maintained, it may be taken that the Invincible class, of the three of which the Indefatigable is the fourth of its class, are approximately as follows:

Invincible. Indefatigable. Length. 530 feet. 600 feet. Displacement. 17,250. 19,000. Horsepower. 41,000. 45,000. Armament. 26 ft. 27 ft. Designated speed. 21 knots. 22 knots. Armament. 12 in (45 c.) 12 in (50 c.) Coal capacity. 2,500 tons. 2,500 tons. Complement. 730. 760.

The Invincible is the first of the new cruiser is set down at 25 knots, but as the three Invincibles which went before her exceeded what was anticipated, it is thought that she will be able to reach a rate of 28 knots were reached. Her eight 12-inch guns, it is said, will be able to embrace a greater zone of fire than those of any which had gone before, and will be competent to discharge a collective broadside of something approaching 7,000 pounds of metal. The first control system will, however, be carried to further stage of perfection through the use of electricity to the fullest extent for power purposes.

table. It goes up by itself!

Another complete levitation of the table.

C—All hands being off the table. Her right hand was free, but perfectly visible, and about six inches above the table.

11:10—E. asks medium to attempt levitation while standing up. She agrees, but presently says she can not stand any longer. She reseats herself.

11:11—Complete levitation of the table.

C—Both hands of the medium were about eight inches above the table. I can clearly feel her left foot across my right; the leg of the table was not in contact with her skirt.

Another complete levitation of the table.

F—My left hand was underneath the bottom of the table leg, and there was no contact between her skirt and the leg of the table. Her right hand was off the table altogether.

C—There was nine inches between her body and the table.

Whatever the silence, we succeeded in obtaining a complete levitation of the table while one of us was under the table holding both her ankles in his hands. The light was abundant. But we were not content with this; we wished to obtain levitations of the table under conditions that did not depend upon our sense perceptions at all.

To insure this, we used a piece of apparatus, made by a carpenter in Naples, which was constructed as follows: Two tapering cones were made and fastened to the floor. Into these wooden cones the legs of the table were placed. The object was to prevent any foot action on the part of the medium, for it is obvious that she could not even touch the legs of the table, as they were thus rounded by the wooden cones. The tapering shape, however, allowed a certain amount of rocking motion on the part of the table. As the top of these cones, and joining them, was affixed a board, this prevented the medium from raising the table with her knees; for had she raised them, they would have come into contact with this board, and would not have reached the lower edge of the table. We tied the medium's feet to this apparatus with rope; we held her hands, arms, and head away from the table, altogether. Yet, in spite of our best endeavors to prevent it, it continued to levitate. After this, we felt that certainly had not been reached, and we were true, beyond a doubt.

During the seventh seance a small milking stool, which we had placed inside the cabinet, came out of its own

accord, and slid along the floor about a yard, approaching the medium. She placed her hand above it and waved it to and fro in various directions. The stool followed these motions, dragging itself along the floor, and finally rose into the air altogether.

We passed our hands between the stool and the floor, and the stool followed, ascertaining that there was no thread, hair, string, or attachment of any kind.

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There was no material resistance, and certainly no solid body was within, pushing the skirt outward. It receded several times under my hand, and was then puffed out again as the sail of a ship might lift before a light breeze. With her permission, we turned back her skirts and petticoats and examined them carefully. We found no mechanism of any sort concealed about her. We may say that at a later seance, to which we had invited Signora Rocca and Miss Crawford—the two daughters of Marion Crawford—and Lord Sudeley, the two ladies made a thorough search, taking Eusapia into a separate room, causing her to strip, and examine her body. No mechanism was found and nothing unusual was discovered about her person.

Of Mr. Carrington's sittings, we heard the following interesting record:

12:06 a.m.—F—I saw a white thing coming over her head; I could not see it, but I felt it.

C—My control exactly the same as before. I also saw the white thing. It looked like a creamy-white object coming out, about six inches above the top of the table, and rising twice, as though pushed by some substance. I could see the round swelling of the skirt.

E—The curtain blows right out, as though pushed by some substance. I could see the round swelling of the skirt.

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