

Trick of the Mind Readers

Methods Are Exposed of Entertainer Who Reveals What is Written in Sealed Envelope.

IF ONE were a modern sorcerer, a fake clairvoyant or medium, or were engaged in any of the modern magic practices whereby the public is deceived and cajoled out of its goods and chattels, such a person would be pardoned for nursing a well-developedrouch, if not a positive dislike, for one David P. Abbott.

This man Abbott for 20 years practiced the occult sciences himself. Now he has gone systematically into the business of exposing how they are performed. He has proved to be one of our most enthusiastic expositors. His mathematical symbol should be: The square of the convert's zeal multiplied by the cube of the reformer's energy, plus the nth power of the scientist's devotion equals Abbott.

Without attempting to controvert the faith of the genuine spiritualist in the slightest, Abbott has spent many years studying so-called materialization and looking for manifestations of the presence of spirits. In a letter to a friend he declares: "No one would be more happy than I were it possible to prove personal immortality in this manner; but I do not wish to be deceived and to believe that which is not true. Therefore, I always look for fraud and trickery in manifestations of this nature. I will further add that in all my life I have been looking for things of this kind, and have never yet been able to see one little thing that was genuine. Always, when I have been present, I have found a trick."

Not the least interesting is his account of the undoing of a stage mind-reader who was practicing some of those feats which often have bewildered theater-goers. A friend, who Abbott had written to, had written to him which defied explanation and appeared enough to convince one that if the man had no occult powers he at least had mastered the secrets of telepathy. None of the ordinary explanations for these feats would do, the friend said. Abbott got on a train at once and went to the city where the performances were taking place.

On each of three nights when Abbott was watching him at work, the seer used a new method and the methods seemed to have nothing in common. Abbott, in his "Behind the Scenes With the Mediums," describes him as a very slender personage, with long hair and a particularly ghostly look. The first night, he took his seat quietly on the stage, after his manager, who made a short speech, had a boy pass through the audience with cards and envelopes. The spectators were asked to write questions on the cards and seal them up in the envelopes.

The boy was well known in the city and was not a confederate. He collected the sealed envelopes in a hat. A committee from the audience then blindfolded the medium, first tying a woman's kid glove over the eyes, to make certain the bandage was impervious to the light. The seer's manager led him to a table back of the stage, on which were some flowers and a music box, but he was never for a minute out of sight of the audience, which could see that the bandage was not molested.

When the boy came on the stage directly from in front, the manager placed a handkerchief over the hat and asked the boy to take a seat on the stage, facing the audience, some ten feet in front of the medium. The manager delivered a brief lecture, after which the boy was asked to take an envelope from the hat and hold it high in his hand. He obeyed and to the amazement of everybody, the medium began answering a question which a man in the audience admitted was his. Every question was answered and every person who had written it was compelled to admit he was satisfied. After the show the envelopes, still sealed, were returned to the writers.

The next night the method was changed. This time the manager collected the envelopes and cards in a small bag with a drawing. As he collected each he gave the writer a number and placed the number on the envelope. When all had been collected he held the bag between the tips of his fingers, above his head, so that it should be in view all the time. Taking it to the stage he hung it upon a cord dangling from a screw eye above, where sight of it could not be lost for a second.

While he was doing this the medium was walking about on the stage reading a Bible. When the bag had been hung in place he put the Bible on a table and then walked forward to the manager's side, where he stood while the latter delivered a brief lecture. At the conclusion of the address he took a seat and picked up the book again.

He turned through it deliberately, occasionally pausing to read a text. After each verse of Scripture he would answer one of the numbered questions. Each writer admitted the question was his. When he had finished the manager took down the bag, poured the envelopes out of it into a basket so the audience could see. Then they were distributed to the writers, the envelopes still sealed.

The third evening the medium was dressed as a Buddhist priest, wearing a large turban. The questions were written as before and collected by the manager in a wicker basket, from which they were emptied on a table on the stage. This time the lecture lasted only a few minutes. The medium then began tapping a small bell as if to summon the spirits and read the questions in a remarkable fashion. Sometimes he would sit at the table. At others he would walk around as if in great mental distress, ringing his bell. When an answer was coming to him he would stop still a moment until he had delivered it. These pauses took place on all parts of the stage.

The audience was completely mystified and some more so than those who had witnessed every performance and got not the slightest hint of trickery. Abbott discovered it, however, and his explanation made the whole thing absurdly simple.

When the boy came on the stage the first night, Abbott noticed, the manager received the hat from him in his right hand, on a natural manner, while he directed the boy to his chair. Naturally, attention was focused on the boy. Abbott alone watched the manager closely

The American Girl Abroad

By Harrison Fisher



On the Thames at Henley

The American Girl Abroad: On her focus the eyes of the Old World, her dazzling, exquisite beauty and elusive Western charm lighting up any company she graces, as the rays of a great searchlight, peering out of the darkness, change dusk to day.

She goes to London for the season, and the foggy, old world metropolis marvels at her changing moods, her spontaneous gaiety, her lightning-like quickness of wit, and her frank democracy, all standing out so clearly against the staid background of British formalities. Everywhere her personality fascinates, and her radiance is the secret envy of the London debutantes and the despair of British matrons with marriageable daughters to this daughter of the Western world. They flock to her stall at theater and opera, to her box at the races, and they thrill at her vivacity, and her rippling laughter is sweet music in their ears long after she has forgotten, in the frank comradeship of plain John Smith, of Home, that such a person as Lord Algy Great-Catch ever paid her ardent court.

She is everywhere—in the shops along Piccadilly and the Strand, in the fashionable hotels, and at the music halls, where the great American product, syncopated music, has taken the British by storm. She revels in the glory of one of those rare natural products of the London climate, a fair day, with a cloudless sky, and enjoys the pleasures of the Thames in common with hundreds of native beauties, not one more queenly in grace and looks than she. And at court, where the cream of British fashion gathers, in her presenta-

tion gown and with her tiara crowning a wealth of chestnut burnished hair, she is the cynosure of all eyes, and all know in their hearts that in her they behold the real queen of her race, crowned afresh each day with the glorious gems of freedom of the great Republic of the West.

Rich, indeed, in new experiences are her days in London town. But, finally, the ancient city begins to bore her with its everlasting fog, its countless buses, its dreary drawl, its tenacious clinging to things that were, and her thoughts, like Alexander's of old, turn to other worlds to conquer. She hears the magical call of Paris, dear to every feminine heart. Thoughts of Venice, too, and of soft Italian skies stir her imagination. And so she prepares to flit. But just as she is all ready to turn her dainty steps Parisward, American-wise, an inspiration flashes across her mind, and she exercises the inalienable privilege of her sex of changing her mind. And so it is not Paris or Venice that next pays court to her, but another corner of the world equally famed in song and story—an island whose sons and daughters have contributed much to the upbuilding of the land she ever holds dear as home.

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The second picture in this series, one of the most popular ever drawn by Harrison Fisher, will appear in this paper next Sunday.

enough to observe that when he picked up the handkerchief from the table he exchanged this hat for another hat.

The two men, of course, were confederates. They simply switched for this bag another in which the prepared dummies had been placed. They hurried back of the stage with the original, read them, wrote them on a slip of paper with the proper numbers and placed the slip in the medium's Bible at the moment he laid it on the table to go forward to his manager when the latter was making his speech. The rest was simple.

The third night's trick was the most brilliant, but Abbott saw through it at once, as it was merely an improvement on the method already well known. The basket in which the envelopes were collected had a double bottom, so arranged that when one is closed the other is opened. The dummies were in it when the manager collected the originals. After he had poured the dummies out on the stage, he tossed the basket carefully to one side and a confederate in the wings got the originals out, read and copied them, sealed them without the audience suspecting.

Now, the heavy folds of the medium's turban contained a tiny telephone receiver which was in place over his ear, concealed by his clothing, wires ran from this to small copper disks on the

sole of each shoe. In the floor of the stage were corresponding copper disks connecting with a telephone back of the stage. Half a dozen sets of these disks had been scattered on the stage.

When the medium wished to establish communication all he had to do was to place the disks on his shoes over a set of disks on the floor. A certain ring of this bell notified an assistant he was ready, and the assistant read the question to him.

Variations of these methods of reading sealed messages and conveying them to the medium are done in practically all of the stage demonstrations of this kind, according to Abbott. There is a much wider range, however, in the method of collecting the messages from the audience. Some of these are truly mystifying, particularly those in which the individual writes his message and keeps it in his own possession.

In most cases these notes are written on paper in tablets furnished by the seer. Several sheets down from the one on which a note is written is a specially prepared sheet of waxed paper. This acts as a sort of white carbon, and when developed with chemicals off stage an exact duplicate of the copy in possession of the writer is in possession of an assistant.

Sometimes visitors prepare their

questions at home on their own paper, which they never allow to leave their possession. These offer the greatest difficulty to the performers, who resort to extraordinary efforts to turn them to their own profit. Usurers, theater managers and close friends of the house keep a sharp lookout for such persons, and when they spot one resort to every means of getting information about them. All the house staff who could possibly recognize them look them over, and even ask questions about them of others in the audience.

Once a name or an occupation of a person can be discovered the city directory, telephone books and any other accessible sources of information are called into service. Even when the author is sitting in complacent ignorance that he is the object of so much attention the city is being scoured for information about him. And after a while he is amazed when the seer says: "I seem to get a message for a lawyer. The spirits are in confusion, but one of them is trying to tell me something for him. I get the impression of a big two-story house on a street full of trees. The houses are far back from the building line, and there is an iron deer on the lawn of the one next to him. It is a short street, some kind of a place—I get the name Parkland."

Yes, it is Parkland place, and I get the number 87—it is the number of the house. Now a name comes to me. It is George Y. Jones. He is asking a question. The spirit seems to be telling him not to worry—that his daughter will not suffer a relapse."

Of course, the medium doesn't know the exact question Mr. Jones has written on his paper, unless some one in the lawyer's confidence has betrayed the information that Mr. Jones has gone to the theater after stopping at the hospital to visit his sick daughter. The medium's shrewdness has done the rest. Mr. Jones is exceedingly mystified by it all, and the performer's reputation has been immeasurably enhanced.

Tip to the Timid.

"Are you a feminist?" we asked the stenographer. She said she was. "What do you mean by feminist?" "Being like men," she answered. "Now you are joking!" "No, I'm not. I mean mental independence. And emotional independence, too—living in relation to the universe rather than in relation to some person." "All men are not like that," we said sadly. "Then they ought to join the feminist movement!"—San Diego Union.

Around the Earth by Aeroplane

Trips Not at All Out of Question, Says Expert, Who Predicts Early Success of Plan.

WHETHER the flight around the earth will be made next year depends entirely upon the conditions laid down, but I feel confident that before the date set for the start of that flight the Atlantic will have been crossed in an airship, and that within five years it will be just an average flight to fly from England to America.

This is the prediction of A. V. Roe, who possesses the triple distinction of being the first Englishman to fly from British soil, the first Englishman to build a hydroplane, and the only man of any nationality who has flown with an engine in his aeroplane as low as nine-horsepower.

Mr. Roe's latest claim to distinction is that he is the designer and constructor of the biplane on which Mr. Raynham broke the British altitude record when he ascended to 12,000 feet and glided for 21 miles with his engine stopped.

His company has built planes fitted with wireless apparatus and light guns, and it is now building a special shed in which four or five huge hydroplanes will be constructed in secret. One of these planes will be driven by twin propellers with two 120-horsepower engines. This will give it a total horsepower of 240, which is about 100-horsepower greater than is possessed by any present flying machine. It will be the largest of its kind on earth or in the air and will carry a gun, wireless outfit and four or five men to an hour or can stay down to 25 miles. The size of the gun has not been determined, but according to the contract it must withstand a recoil of half a ton. The hydroplane will also carry fuel and lubricating oil sufficient for a period of six hours.

In speaking of the difficulties to be overcome in carrying out this class of machine, Mr. Roe said:

"It's all a question of motive power. Given a sufficiently powerful engine you could lift Westminster Abbey and fly away with it. The difficulties of flight as such have been conquered, it is now a matter of perfecting the motors and making them more powerful."

"Flying in its earliest days was a nerve-racking business. Men were up against an entirely new proposition. They did not understand the intricacies and trickery of the air as they now do. The machines were not to be relied upon nor were they as easy of control as they now are."

"It was the same with the motor car in its first stages. They were always going wrong. There was always engine trouble of some kind. But the cars were on the ground and the driver could get out and fix the engine or have the car towed to a mechanic. In the air this was not possible, and a broken engine meant a broken neck."

"The engines of the aeroplanes now run as smoothly as the engines on motor cars; in fact, they run more smoothly, because they are more carefully constructed and there is more time and money spent on them. The more we know about the air the less nerve strain and vigilance we have to use upon our flights. In the early days we were always wondering what was coming next, and where we would light and how when that unexpected thing did happen."

"Five years from now flying will be the popular sport of the well-to-do. This may sound strange to many now, but it is coming just as sure as the price of aeroplanes falls. The mechanical and human difficulties are being reduced by leaps and bounds and the price difficulty will be the next thing to go. Last year there was six times as much flying as there was in 1912, and the total flights in the world averaged from 10,000 to 15,000 miles each week of the year. The fatalities attending these flights were reduced, while the flights were increased. At present aeroplanes are very expensive and a good one costs from \$5000 up—and mostly up. This high cost is due to the fact that there are so many improvements being made, and designs vary almost from day to day. It is only a question of time when the machines will be standardized and it will be as easy to turn them out at a profit and as cheap as motor cars are now turned out. In fact, they will be cheaper than most automobiles, and a good machine can be purchased in 1920 for \$2500 or even less."

"Flying will then be the rage. For the margin of danger will also have diminished. There is not much danger now. The risks had to be run in the early days, because it was only by practical experiment that sound principles could be hammered out. For instance, I went up twice with motors too heavy for a decent plane—substituted motors—said on both occasions I came down with a rush."

"Once the engine buried itself six feet in the earth, and the spectators came hurrying along, thinking the same would have to be done with me. And if my machine had been afloat, as all other biplanes then had, no doubt I should have been done for. I got off with a day in the hospital and several stitches here," and Mr. Roe located with his finger a scar on his inventive forehead.

"Another difficulty hitherto has been due to the fact that a machine has needed a good deal of space in which to alight. But that is being got over. Here we are going to fit our machines with aerial brakes—that is to say, planes that can be brought flush against the air in descending, so that the speed of a descent may be slackened until the impetus on reaching the ground will be so slight that the machine can be brought to a standstill a few yards. This will mean a flying both safer and more convenient."

Looked in Her Windows.

As my kitchen and pantry windows are so placed that the chance passer-by can get a good view of the interior of the rooms, I resorted to the following expedient: I had ordered that my screens painted white added to the privacy of a room without obstructing the view from the inside, but as white is too glaring for the color scheme of our house, I used paint of the same color as the weather boarding, which is a soft yellow. I thinned the paint slightly and applied sparingly with a small brush, and now, even at a very short distance, the interior of the rooms is not visible to those passing.—Woman's Home Companion.