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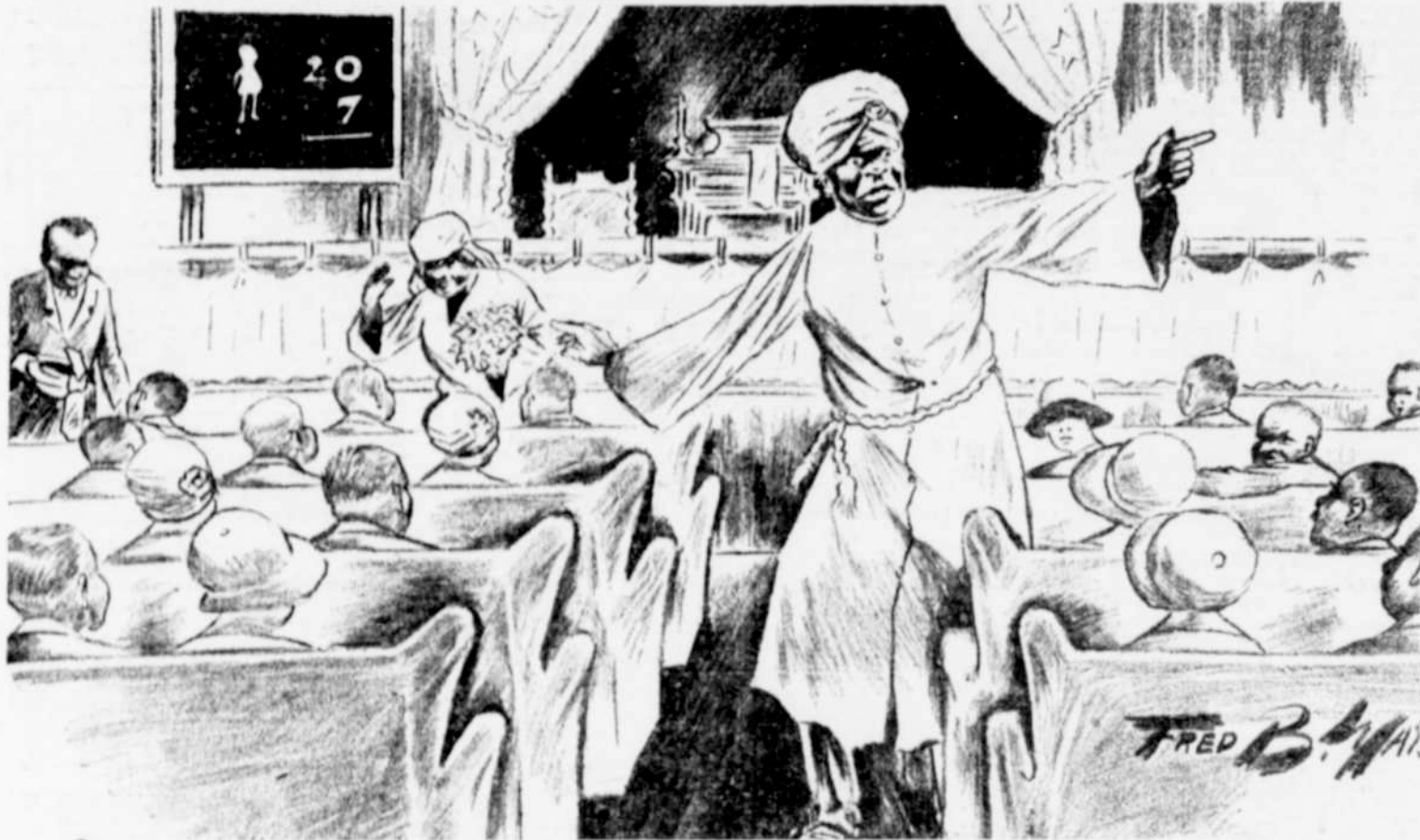
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## SPIRITUALISM

## The New Racket



Tall, dark, dignified, the "Spiritualist" began his discourse. Love-lorn ladies, he answered individually.

Contrary to General Opinion, there are Hundreds, Even Thousands, of People, White and Black, in Harlem, who are Believers in Conjuring and Fixin'.

New York's Spiritualists, Mediums and Fakers Mule Gullible Suckers of Thousands of Dollars Annually.

By CHARLES PEARCE

The firm belief that some persons are endowed with super-natural powers takes hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the pockets of superstitious white and colored persons in New York annually.

Spiritualists, as they are called, thrive in this great city, inhabiting basements, stores, roof apartments, not particular at all as to the neighborhood. And every "spiritualist church" is doing a great business, especially in these days of "depression."

The laws of the State of New York forbid fortune telling in any form, but the spiritualists get around this in a most clever manner.

One night, some few years ago a few of us were gathered at a friend's apartment in Harlem when someone suggested going to a spiritualist's meeting.

It was a novelty to me and I readily agreed to join the party. We looked through the papers and finally decided to visit one of the better known "mediums" who could always be counted upon to furnish entertainment. This particular medium was a man. Later, he ran into conflict with the law on another proposition, but as a medium, he was more than successful.

### Dark Street, Dark Basement

In a dark street, in a darker basement, we found his rendezvous. Gathered ahead of us was a motley crowd, mostly women. They were chanting in true plantation style, hymns calculated to work them up to the proper pitch.

The medium entered. Tall, dark and dignified, he began his discourse. Standing on the platform, behind which was a mysterious drapery, he discussed ordinary subjects until the proper crowd had arrived. He then passed around the hat, not for the collection, but to receive slips upon which the anxious attendants had written questions.

### She Questions

Varying in nature, the questions ran from the ridiculous to the sublime. The main topic was the "numbers"—the second in importance, love affairs. Practically every woman attending that meeting was having difficulty with her boy friend, husband or sweetheart! And the medium, receiving from his servant, the hat full of questions, picked them out one by one. The numbers queried, he sep-

arated into a pile to take up later. Love-lorn ladies were answered individually. Calling out the question, the person desiring the answer would nod acknowledgement—and strange to say, no one would laugh at her—and then receive the proper reply.

### Numbers on Blackboard

In the matter of the numbers, the medium went to a blackboard and after several mysterious passes before the board, he began drawing designs from which he deduced the proper numbers to play!

Eager fingers fumbled in bags for pencils and paper to copy the number before the ever ready eraser wiped them from the board forever. Hastily scribbling the numbers down, the audience eased back in their seats while the medium dropped off his usual spiel about the veracity of the numbers he had just presented his followers.

He didn't guarantee them, but the players must play the number he had given continuously. And strange to say, he wouldn't write one series, he would give several numbers.

### Basket Passed

After the usual rites were over, the collected basket was quietly passed while more hymns were sung. Any one desiring a private hearing could get it by paying the proper fee. The collection seemed to yield a considerable amount, because no less than a quarter would be accepted by the person passing the basket. Benediction followed and the crowd was dismissed.

That was a small timer. The big-timers go in for more elaborate stuff—using theatrical effects to impress their visitors, and to obtain the proper pitch of enthusiasm.

Harlem is infested with them. They advertise in local papers, weeklies and dailies and it isn't strange to see an automobile indicating persons of wealth, pulling up in front of these churches to peer into the future.

### More Around City

Mediums move from one part of the city to another when things get too warm for them. Their followers are advised of this, and if the medium is good, she has no trouble keeping her little flock.

During the campaign of Hubert Delany for election to Congress, a meeting was scheduled to be held in

a house high up on "Sugar Hill." It was on the second floor above a group of stores. As the evening wore on, white and colored persons entered quietly and took seats in the large room, awaiting the usual proceedings.

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