

then give another test. As these experiments are always tried alone with one or, at most, two subjects, a failure attracts little notice.

Now I cannot say positively that Dr. Schlossenger performed this experiment in exactly this same manner; but I do have a recollection of his hurrying me along in my writing at some stage of its progress. I also know that I can succeed as often as he did. I will add further that a few days later I prepared six names in advance, and, with my wife, had a sitting with the medium; this time, although I paid him, he failed utterly. He tried in every way and had me write additional names. This time I guarded the points in the above explanation, yet no matter how he tried, he made an utter failure. All tricks require certain conditions, and this is why it is not safe to repeat the same trick for the same person. There is too much danger that the subject may notice the sameness of the *modus operandi*.

Referring to the second test which was given by the medium to my father, I will state that when the subjects are writing the cities and diseases, they will naturally pause after writing the city, to think of a disease to go with it. Of course, when writing the correct ones, which are already in mind, no pause will be necessary. Also advantage may be taken of the fact that a small per cent of persons die of smallpox or measles. If in giving the directions one says, "Write like this: 'Philadelphia smallpox, New York measles,'" and the subject writes smallpox or measles in the list, it is safe to eliminate that from the case. This is especially true if written in connection with some large city, the name of which occurs readily to the mind. It is safe also to eliminate Philadelphia or New York if these should be written, providing you mentioned these names in the directions, and that the test is not being given in their section of the country. A small per cent of the people of a country die in any two places of prominence. Yet these places will be written readily by most subjects if they are suggested, or at least other

places of equal prominence will be written. If an unusual place or disease should be written, it is almost certain these are the ones.

It can readily be seen how expert one can become at this by continuous practice, such as a medium has many times a day; how one can learn to take advantage of every little point, and use it with telling effect on unsuspecting strangers, who do not know what is going to happen, or what to look for.

I have been told that Dr. Schlossenger had a very sharp eye, although wearing glasses; and that the glasses were probably to make the subject think it impossible for him to read writing when they were moved out of position and placed on the forehead, as they were during the tests. It has also been suggested that his poor hearing was feigned, to enable him to hear remarks made about himself in his presence. I have suspected that his memory had become trained to a high degree of accuracy, enabling him to give his tests with such marvelous success, as he did with nearly all wherever he went. That he does not use one set of principles only in his tricks, I am certain, but has many more at his command which he uses continually. However, I can only vaguely guess at them from having seen his tests but once.

Now, I do not say that this was the method employed by the lady with Rev. Savage, given in the account at the beginning of this chapter. But as the experiments are practically the same, it is safe to conclude that the methods used are the same, or nearly so. If the test were genuine in the case of the lady mentioned, it was probably genuine in the case of Dr. Schlossenger. On the other hand, if it were trickery in one case, it probably was in both.

#### MIND READING IN PUBLIC

NOT long ago I received a letter from an old-time friend, in which he urgently requested me to make a journey to

his city. In bygone days he and I had spent many hours together, discussing the mysteries of existence, the hidden powers which nature manifests to us, and the origin and destiny of the human soul. My friend is a physician, and what is more, an earnest student; and he is also an investigator of that strange phenomenon in nature which manifests itself in organized beings subjectively, as thought, feeling and things spiritual.

Many times had we discussed the possibility and also the probability of an existence of the spiritual part of man after death. Many times had he reported to me cases of strange phenomena that tended to prove the indestructibility of spirit.

When I received this missive, it stated to me that the writer most earnestly desired my presence in his city, that I might assist in investigating a very strange and marvelous case of psychic phenomena. The case was that of a certain traveling spirit medium, who claimed the power to summon from the realms of the invisible the shades of our departed friends and loved ones. He gave most marvelous exhibitions to prove his strange and miraculous power. My friend stated that he thought he had at last found a person with at least some queer psychical gift, if not even possessing the power that he claimed. He had watched the exhibition most carefully, and had even served on a committee on the psychic's stage; and he could find no evidence of trickery of any kind. He was inclined to believe that this strange being really possessed the power of vision without the use of human eyes as he certainly read sealed missives, of which he could in no secret manner have obtained knowledge.

Accordingly, on Saturday evening, I journeyed to a city one hundred miles away to witness the work of this modern sorcerer. On my arrival I suggested to my friend a number of ways by which such things could be performed by trickery, but he informed me that none of my explanations seemed to elucidate this strange work. The secret did not consist in the use of odorless alcohol, for the rea-

son that the medium never touched the sealed envelopes at all. In fact he was never nearer to them than ten feet. This also made it impossible for him to use the principle on which the trick is based, which is known to the profession as "Washington Irving Bishop's Sealed Letter Reading."

He informed me that sheets of paper or cards were passed to the spectators in the audience, and at the same time envelopes in which to seal their questions were furnished for them; that the spectators wrote questions as directed, many times signing their own names to them. He was certain that many persons folded their written questions before sealing them, and that the operator himself did not even collect the envelopes on many occasions. He informed me that the best evidence of the genuineness of the performance lay in the fact that the medium seemed to have no fixed conditions for his experiments; but seemed to perform them in a different manner on each occasion. The conditions were different in every case, yet he always read the questions with the most marvelous certainty.

I thought the matter over after this, but could in no way think of any plausible means of accomplishing his work by trickery. I finally decided to wait and see the performance first, and to figure afterwards on the method employed.

Accordingly, at eight o'clock that evening I was seated in the hall with my friend, and shortly afterwards the "Seer" made his appearance, taking his seat on the stage. He was a very slender personage, with long hair and a particularly ghostly look. He took his seat quietly on the stage. In a short time his manager appeared and made an opening address, which I will not repeat, and then asked some boy in the audience to pass cards around to the spectators on which they were to write questions. Envelopes were also distributed, in which to seal the cards. When the writing was finished, the manager asked any boy to take a hat which he held in his hand, and collect

the sealed envelopes. After the boy, whom everyone knew to be a local resident, kindly volunteered for this service and executed it, a committee was invited to the stage to properly blindfold the medium. This was done in a satisfactory manner, and the committee then returned to the audience. The manager now led the blindfolded medium to the rear of the stage, where he was seated somewhat behind a table, on which were some flowers, a music box, etc. However, the medium was in view plainly; and he never removed the bandage from his eyes or in any manner molested it.

When the boy came on the stage directly from the front with the hat full of sealed envelopes, the manager placed a handkerchief over the hat and asked the boy to take a seat near the front of the stage facing the audience. He was also directed to hold the hat in his lap, and to deliver the envelopes to the manager, one at a time, as he should call for them.

The operator now delivered a lecture, lasting some ten or fifteen minutes, explaining the strange powers of the blindfolded medium, who sat at the rear of the stage in full view; while the boy still maintained the seat at the front of the stage, and held the hat of envelopes in sight of all.

After the lecture, the manager requested the boy to give him one of the envelopes, which the boy did. The manager did not look toward it in any manner; but took it in the tips of his right fingers, held it in the air, and asked the medium to give the writer of this question a test. The medium shivered a few times, allowed his frame to convulse slightly, and thus began:

"I feel the influence of one who was a brother. I get the name of Clarence. Will the one who wrote this question identify it as his?" There was no response from the spectators, and the medium asked again that the writer speak out. Still silence greeted his request; when suddenly he pointed his bony finger into the crowd, while his blinded face confronted them, and exclaimed: "Mr. John

H——, why do you not respond to your test?" A gentleman in the audience then acknowledged the test as his. The medium then continued: "Clarence was drowned. I sense the cold chilly water as it envelopes his form." At this the lady sitting with the gentleman began to cry. The medium continued: "The drowning was wholly an accident. There was no foul play. Now, Mr. H——, have I answered your question, and are you satisfied with your test?" The gentleman, a well-known citizen, acknowledged that he was perfectly satisfied.

The manager then laid the envelope on a small table and asked the boy for another one. The boy gave him another from the hat when the blindfolded medium, ten feet or more distant, gave the second test.

He shivered again and began: "I feel the influence of a young lady who died suddenly. She says, 'Sister Mary, I am very happy, and death was not so hard to endure. I want you to consult a good honorable attorney, and take his advice in the lawsuit you ask me about.'" The medium then continued, "Miss L——, your sister regards you with a look of great tenderness and love. Are you satisfied with your test?" A lady then replied that she certainly was entirely convinced.

The manager now laid this sealed envelope beside the other one and again called for another. This was continued until all of the envelopes in the hat were removed and the questions answered. None of the envelopes were opened. In some instances the medium first read the questions, word for word, before answering them; and when he did so, he described the writing minutely, even the formation of the strokes of the letters.

After all of these tests were given, the medium removed the blindfold and seemed much exhausted. Then the tables were removed to one side of the stage, and a cabinet erected; after which some cabinet manifestations that were very interesting were given. When these were over, the manager collected the sealed envelopes from the table, and placed them on the front of the stage, inviting the writers

to call, should they so desire, and get their questions. Some availed themselves of this opportunity and tore open a number of the envelopes until they found their own questions. The audience seemed greatly impressed with this exhibition, and the next day it was the talk of the town.

On the next evening I again repaired to the public hall to witness and, if possible, fathom this performance. This time, however, I found that an entirely different method was employed. Envelopes and slips of paper were distributed; and after the questions were written and sealed the manager went about the room, gathering them up in a small black bag with a drawstring around its top. As he gathered up each one, and while the writer still held it, he gave to that person a number which was to serve as that particular person's number during the tests. At the same time the manager marked the number on the subject's envelope, while the subject held it, drawing a circle around the figure, after which the subject dropped the envelope into the sack.

When all were collected, the operator took the sack in the tips of his fingers, and holding it aloft, walked up the runway to the stage where a cord hung from a screw-eye fastened in the ceiling above. The other end of the cord was attached to a piece of furniture on the stage. The manager now attached the black bag containing the envelopes to the end of this string, and then taking the other end, drew the bag up to the ceiling near the screw-eye, where it remained in full view during the tests.

While the manager was doing all this, the ghost-like medium had been walking about the stage, reading in a large Bible. He now laid the Bible on a table and advanced to the front of the stage, while the manager delivered a lecture on spiritual philosophy and also on the strange power of the medium. After this the manager announced that the medium would hold a Bible service, during which time he would give the tests.

The medium now took his Bible, and seating himself in

a chair facing the audience, began by reading a verse. After this he closed his eyes for a time, and then gave the first test. He began: "I will give these tests in the order in which the manager gave you your numbers, commencing with number one. Now, Mrs. Clara S—, I see standing near you an elderly lady, somewhat stooped; but I cannot see her face plainly. She seems to be your mother. She says to tell you that your son is doing well where he is, and for you not to worry, for he will return to you in time. Are you satisfied?" A lady in the audience was visibly affected, and acknowledged that the medium had answered her question correctly. The medium read another verse in the Bible, after which he gave the second test in a manner similar to the way in which he had given the first one. After this he read another verse, and so continued until all the questions in the sack were answered. The manager now lowered the sack, and emptying the envelopes into a small basket distributed them unopened to their writers.

The effect of this exhibition was fully as great as was that of the former one, and the medium continued to be the wonder of the town.

On the next evening I again attended the meeting. On this occasion questions were written and sealed as on the former occasions. This time the medium was dressed as a "Mahatma," wearing a large turban. As soon as the questions were written, the manager collected them in a small wicker basket, and emptied them on a table on the stage. He only talked for a moment, describing what the medium would do. During all this time the medium was seated near the front of the stage. The medium now tapped a little bell he held in his hand, as if summoning the spirits, and began giving the tests in the most marvelous manner. He seemed somewhat nervous, and finally arose and walked across the stage, stopped a moment and then continued his walk. Meanwhile he kept giving the tests. Occasionally he would walk about nervously, and