

SOME FAMOUS EXPOSURES

David P. Abbott

Table of Contents

<u>SOME FAMOUS EXPOSURES</u>	1
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Probably the greatest swindle ever perpetrated in the name of spiritualism was recently brought to light in Stockton, California. The medium and his confederates materialized everything from frogs and small fish to a huge boulder of gold quartz weighing several hundred pounds. This latter had to be brought from the mountains with a mule team.

The materializing was done through sliding panels in the walls, while the believers sat holding hands about the opposite side of a table, and loudly singing sacred hymns. They had the only door to the room locked and sealed, and never dreamed that the spirits who brought the quartz from the mine were mules.

Thousands of dollars were invested in this "spirit mine," the believers stacking their money on the quartz as it lay on the table at a dark seance, and receiving deeds in return for their money, which the spirits dematerialized.

The medium established, or had his spirits establish, a "Treasury of Heaven," for the faithful to deposit their money in, and on which they were to receive fifty per cent interest. This interest the believers continued to receive at dark seances from the spirits for a time. Each sitter's interest was found on the table stacked in front of him when the lights were lighted. When the spirit bank became insolvent and the chief medium disappeared, the believers were out about thirty-five thousand dollars.

No less a personage than a millionaire of Tacoma, Washington, is said to have contributed largely to this spirit fund. I had known of this case for some time before the exposure (conducted by a performer engaged for the purpose), and knew that certain interested persons were contemplating bringing it about, in order to rescue certain estimable persons from the clutches of these mediums. This was successful; and the confederates of the medium signed written confessions in the presence of one of the most devout of the believers, and a gentleman who is otherwise very intelligent. Upon this the gentleman was greatly crestfallen, but he still insists that there are certain mediums who are not impostors; and that certain mediums in Chicago who produce spirit portraits are genuine.

A full and very interesting account of this exposure is given in the San Francisco Examiner of March 3 and 4, 1907.

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I could report enough cases of materialization to fill a volume. These I know of, from various sources, and in every case they were invariably fraudulent. I will give a short account of a materialization which a very expert medium, who is on friendly terms with me, witnessed. The gentleman was originally a minister, and afterwards began investigating spiritualism, as he was a believer in it. He hoped to become a medium; and at one time paid two lady mediums of some renown, who reside in Chicago, three dollars a sitting for three sittings a week. These sittings were conducted for the purpose of developing this gentleman in mediumship. He continued this for a long time, but he was no nearer to being a medium than he was in the beginning.

At one time he detected one of the sisters passing a slate to the other, and substituting another in its place. He saw the edge of one of the slates protruding from behind the dress of one of the sisters. They never knew they were

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discovered as he said nothing, but this "opened his eyes." After this he investigated everywhere, but he was no nearer to being a medium than he was in the beginning.

At one time he detected one of the sisters passing a slate to the other, and substituting another in its place. He saw the edge of one of the slates protruding from behind the dress of one of the sisters. They never knew they were discovered as he said nothing, but this "opened his eyes." After this he investigated everywhere, and at every opportunity, and grew to be a very expert medium himself.

Recently, when in Los Angeles, he visited a seance conducted by a medium who claimed to be a Buddhist priest. This medium was known under the name of "The Reverend Swami Mazzininanda." He had an altar in his home, constructed something like those in Roman Catholic churches. He had various candles and images on this altar, including an image of Buddha, and also a number of mystical figures. It was a great mixture of "fake" Buddhism, Roman Catholicism, and modern spiritualism. The medium also wore the costume of a Buddhist priest at his seances.

This "priest" held services here for the faithful. He conducted all in Hindoostani (?), his native tongue. He chanted, prayed to Buddha, etc., all in a queer-sounding "gibberish." Certain evenings of the week were devoted to "soul-travel," and certain evenings after the religious services a "Black Chapter" was held.

The gentleman whom I have mentioned attended one of these dark seances. He sat with other spectators around the room in perfect darkness. The spectators were not required to hold hands, so great was their faith. Finally, in the darkness, a queer-looking, vapory, luminous form floated around in the air and paused in front of the spectators. My friend slipped down quietly on his knees, and gradually worked closer and closer to the luminous form, until he could detect that the vapor was a kind of luminous "cheese cloth." He did not desire to expose this "priest," but he desired to have the "priest" know that some one had discovered him. My friend accordingly took hold of the gauze and gave it a very slight downward jerk. He then immediately returned quietly to his seat.

There was an immediate pause in the discourse of the "priest," who had really been floating this form on the end of a stick. Everyone knew that something had happened, but no one but my friend knew what it was. The "priest" then said in his slow, peculiar, eccentric and measured tones, "I have received a very great shock; and I will be unable to continue further this evening." The next day, when in conversation with some of the "faithful," this "priest" stated in his peculiar manner of speaking, and with intense earnestness, that which follows: "Last night I received a very great shock. I was just in the middle of the 'Dark Chapter' and the spirit of the Master, Krishna, was out. Having spent the greater portion of my life on the Himalayas, my right eye has become injured by the snows." Then pointing to his right eye, he added, "My right eye has a defect in it which you cannot see; but on account of that, I can only see in the dark with it. I immediately turned my right eye downward and I looked! I distinctly saw a lady's hand reached out toward my robe in the darkness, and this hand took hold of it and jerked it lightly just like this." The "Reverend Swami" here illustrated, by slightly jerking his coat downward. It was very amusing to hear him, in great seriousness, relate this in his low and measured accents to his faithful followers.

Shortly after this, when the Los Angeles Herald was conducting a crusade against the numerous mediums of that city, and when it had an exhibit in its windows of the confiscated material of some of them, this "Buddhist priest" was arrested and imprisoned for some of his practices.