

# THIS IS AN ERA OF MYSTICISM.

## Famous Men and Women Searching For the Truth.

Kings and Queens, Actors, Lawyers, Novelists, Clergymen and Physicians Seeking Knowledge of Unseen Forces.

A wave of psychic thought has swept over the entire universe; the very air is laden with magnetism, electricity, hypnotic suggestion, and one falls to wondering whether we are on the verge of a sublime truth or a dispiriting fallacy.

The first half of the nineteenth century was intensely materialistic, but during the fast waning years of the dying cycle the world is being dominated by mysticism. Even the minds of the sternest realists have become tinged with the new but ever old beliefs, call them superstition or what you will. The grasping capitalist, the close fist merchant, the carping scientist, the cool headed philosopher and the empty pated woman of fashion all agree that there is a mysterious something in the air that they feel, but fail to comprehend.

Astrology, fallen into disuse for several centuries, is now almost recognized as a divine truth; theosophy comes to us from the mountains and jungles of India, and America claims the distinction of being the birthplace of modern spiritualism.

No infant is born in the orient but an astrologer is consulted as to the stellar conditions under which it came into the world. Nowadays no child of influential parents sees the light but straightway some enterprising newspaper man repairs to an astrologer and has the baby's horoscope cast. No celebrated personage who commits a crime or is overwhelmed by dire misfortune escapes this crucial test, and all of his evil doings are traced to the influence of some baleful star. The worst comes from his wrongdoing by declaring that he was pursued by a malevolent fate and was pushed to his doom by unseen agencies.

Many men, even those of hard common sense, never undertake anything of importance without consulting an astrologer. This is especially the case with Wall street speculators, sporting men and actors.

An astrologer who has a great vogue is consulted daily by a well known importer, who never makes a new contract or signs any papers without finding out whether the planets are in fortunate conjunction. Should the configurations be unfavorable, the man waits until a change has taken place. This person declares that when he follows the advice of his astrologer he never makes a mistake and that when he does otherwise he is unlucky.

It is a well known fact that there is a woman calling herself a psychometrist who haunts the New York City Consolidated Stock Exchange. She gives tips to the brokers, who either pay her a certain percentage of the earnings or offer her a fee for her services. This self constituted sibyl is not, however, invariably successful, and high words frequently pass between her and her credulous clients.

A distinguished artist in New York declares that his only successful pictures are those painted under inspirational teachings and vows that he never has any luck if he goes contrary to the reading of his adviser, a prominent astrologer. He only begins a great painting when certain planets are amicably disposed in his horoscope or when the moon is on the increase in his natal sign.

I asked a famous star reader whether he could give points about speculation and whether Wall street operators ever consulted him. He was honest enough to say that if he could predict for a certainty the rise and fall in stocks he would be a millionaire instead of a poor astrologer.

"I know of course," he said, "that certain conjunctions or oppositions of the planets imply disaster, while others are propitious; however, the money kings of the street make such extraordinary combinations that they outwit even the stars, and we cannot always foretell their moves."

Jay Gould put implicit faith in the rulings of the stars and was superstitious to a degree. He never attempted any big deal without first finding out whether the planets were favorably disposed toward him. The king of finance occasionally visited a certain astrologer in whom he placed implicit confidence, but more often he made his calculations himself. He was entirely capable of casting a horoscope, as he owned a large collection of astrological books, which he kept hidden away in an obscure corner of his library. Daniel Huntington, Jim Keene and, in fact, most men who are given to speculation are believers in lucky days and numbers.

It seems that certain stars indicate the time for certain deals in stocks. Thus when Venus is in fortunate conjunction with the natal star, it is safe to take a fier in sugar, or if Jupiter is happily aspected wheat will be a good speculation, and so on.

About 40 years ago the Fox sisters discovered, or invented, spiritualism. The Rochester rappings became world renowned and brought the Fox girls before the public. One of the sisters died two or three years ago, after having denounced spiritualism as a fraud and exposed it. She afterward recanted and declared that she was driven to do so by the spur of necessity, a certain sum having been offered her if she would confess to the deception. This woman was morally degraded and a physical wreck. Although this was an accepted fact, she was fortunate by a

number of prominent spiritualists, who did it in recognition of her valuable discovery. She claimed to be the widow of Kane of arctic exploration fame.

Mediums, with real or simulated pow-



er, have sprung up all over the world, and believers have multiplied until they are numbered by hundreds of thousands.

One of the earliest converts to spiritualism was a distinguished member of the New York bar, Judge Edmonds. Weekly seances were inaugurated at his hospitable home, which was presided over by his beautiful and charming daughter, Laura Edmonds, now Mrs. Gilmore. Judge Edmonds' residence was the rendezvous for all those who wished to inquire into the truths of the new revelation. Among the habitués were Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Mrs. Kellogg, the mother of Clara Louise Kellogg; Frank Carpenter, the artist; McDonald, the sculptor; the sweet poets, Alice and Phoebe Cary, and many others famed in literature and art. Judge Edmonds wrote a remarkable work on spiritualistic phenomena and commenced an austere law treatise which was interrupted by death. It is asserted that his daughter was enabled to complete it through communications received from her father in the spirit world.

Edwin Booth, with his impressionable nature, became thoroughly imbued with the doctrine and, it is said, received frequent messages from his dead father and wife. This belief was quite in keeping with the melancholy temper of the actor. He was also a frequent visitor at Charley Foster's, the well known medium.

Joseph Jefferson, after a thorough investigation, became an advocate of spiritualism. He is a fine amateur artist, and his friends say, never took a lesson. It is said that he believes that his genius is an inspiration derived from dead and gone masters in the spirit land. His daughter, who was ill for some time, was cured through the intervention of Charley Foster.

President and Mrs. Cleveland, who are close friends of the Jeffersons, have, it is whispered, become convinced of the truths of spiritualism. However, this is a tabooed subject except in the intimacy of the two families and a secret carefully guarded from the public.

Clara Louise Kellogg was reared in an atmosphere of mysticism and saw nothing strange in the assertion that she was guided by unseen influences. Mrs. Kellogg believed that friendly spirits fostered the musical intelligence of her gifted daughter and were intimate factors in her success. Clara Louise was never overfond of study, and was often soundly berated by her music teacher, an excitable Frenchman. Mrs. Kellogg would often poke her head through the doorway and say: "Never mind, professor, go away and let Clara Louise alone. She hasn't a bit of sense today. The spirits will come to her by and by and explain her lessons. Come back tomorrow and she'll be all right." The irate professor, who hadn't the faith in the good lady, would pick up his hat, slam the door and leave the embryo prima donna to herself and her spirit guides. When he returned for the next lesson, his pupil would sing like a bird. Whether Clara Louise became repentant and diligently applied herself to her task or whether she was really instructed by disembodied spirits it would be difficult to say. The professor shook his head significantly when questioned about the matter.

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tration through a medium who was in the confidence of Mrs. Carson, a rich Newburg widow. Through this medium Mrs. Carson's husband returned, urged the painting of the picture, and, it is said, made many valuable suggestions. This fine canvas was presented to Queen Victoria by Mrs. Carson.

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The head and front of the latter day spiritualists was Henry J. Newton, a wealthy and philanthropic New York, now dead. It was mainly through his liberality that the various spiritualistic societies were supported, and he pre-



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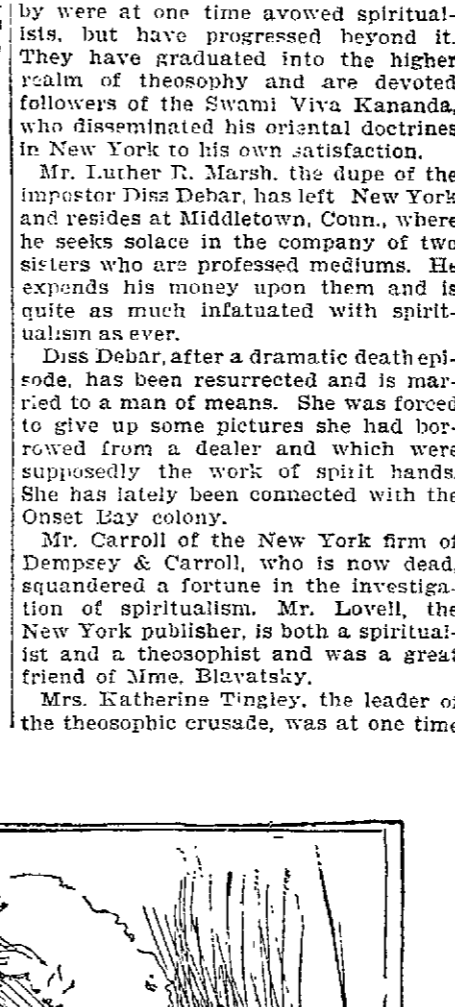
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enlightenment supposedly made many wonderful revelations. She and Mrs. Besant have declared war to the knife.

Mrs. Besant for a number of years lived with Blavatsky in London, and when she died the madame's mantle fell upon her shoulders, and she became the high priestess of the English theosophists. Mrs. Besant declares that Mrs. Blavatsky has been reincarnated in the person of an East Indian boy. The American theosophists claim that her spirit has taken possession of the infant form of the baby of Claude Falls Wright, the madame's former secretary.

A number of prominent personages in France, England and Russia are full fledged spiritualists. The Duchesse de Pomar, now dead, was the leader of the French branch of spiritualists and believed herself the reincarnation of Mary, queen of Scots.

Queen Victoria herself is firmly convinced of the truth of spiritualism, but she has endeavored to keep it a secret. She gives frequent audiences to clairvoyants, mediums and astrologers. Since her husband's death the Princess Beatrice has also been converted. It is said that during these royal seances the prince consort, Battenberg and John Brown return to earth and hold familiar converse with the living. The mystical novels of Marie Corelli are Victoria's favorite reading. The Prince of Wales shares somewhat in this idiosyncrasy. If not a spiritualist, he has great faith in lucky and unlucky omens and will not enter a horse in a race unless the stellar conditions are favorable.

Marie Corelli claims that her wonderfully constructed novels were inspired by spirit guides, she being only their mouthpiece.

Florence Marrayat is what might be called a rabid believer in spiritualism, her novel, "There is No Death," dealing with the most remarkable phenomena.

Bulwer Lytton gives frequent proof in his novels of his belief in the occult. Owen Meredith inherited this tendency from his father and refused to inhabit a certain family estate because of a phantom boy who appeared before every death.

The father of the present emperor of Russia, made Home, the famous American medium, his bosom friend and consulted the spirits on all occasions of importance. Home married a Russian princess.

Napoleon III was in frequent consultation with French and American mediums and had great faith in their mystical powers. They often held seances in the Tuilleries. Alan Kardec was a renowned French spiritualistic medium of that period.

Professor Zollner, the distinguished German scientist, tested the psychic powers of Slade, the American medium, and was apparently satisfied with the result. He has embodied his strange experiences in a book, in which he explains the marvels performed by Slade upon the hypothesis of a "fourth dimension."

Professor Alfred Russell Wallace, who collaborated with Darwin, was an enthusiastic spiritualist.

Professor Crookes, the scientist, is also a convert and explains many of his marvelous discoveries in this way.

Mr. W. T. Stead of London, editor of The Pall Mall Gazette, and who is the author of that remarkable work, "If Christ Should Come to Chicago," is an avowed believer and belongs to the London Society of Spiritualists.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps is a disciple of the spiritualistic cult and strongly

advocates this belief in her books, "The Gates Ajar" and "The Gates Wide Open."

Elia Wheeler Wilcox has great faith in astrologists, palmists and gypsy fortune tellers. She believes in transmigration and owns a beautiful cat for which she has a great affection. She declares that her soul was once contained in the body of a cat.

Minnie Madden Fiske, the actress, has imbibed the Buddhistic idea of transmigration and is a lover of the occult.

The Countess de Brazza is high up in the theosophical ranks and is a devotee at the shrine of Buddha.

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