

Madame Ouija, Bolshevik of the Spirit World

Sinister Suggestion by a Worshipper of the Psychic Goddess That There's a Slight Impediment in Her Veracity

By BENJAMIN DE CASSERES

IF Satan is the Father of Lies he has a running mate for a wife that travels with him neck-and-neck, Mme. Ouija, who is the Mother of Lies. Where was Mamma Ouija born, or in the heart or in the head? to do a slight paraphrase of the Bard of Avon—by no means the "late Mr. Shakespeare" any more, since Mamma has got him by the goatee and boils his wisdom out over her board, more of which shall appear in this.

Well, no matter where Mamma Ouija was born—some say in that insane gully in the human brain that led Voltaire to declare that the Earth was the Mattea-wan of the sidereal system—she has planked her board right down on the lap of the earth to the delight of Homus Boobus.

Everybody's doing it. It is the new fairyland. It is the universal amusement. The Cabaret of Ghosts is running performances night and day. The spirits are crowding around us from the Five Points (and Hell's Kitchen, too) of eternity, weaving in our ear Legends of the Lost Collarbutton, Sagas of the Great Booze Era, Runes of Fourth Dimensional Collectors from Trans-Material Installment Houses, Epics of the Confiscated Egg, and so on.

Babies used to have a layout when they bellowed their way into the world; now they are put on a ouija board and told to come across with something. Telephones are rapidly falling into the discard; men, women and children ring up Hyperspace and talk with their ancestors and their pre-natal souls. Books are being written with the aid of "controls"; the stock market has abandoned the ticker for the ouija pointer; the weather forecaster has tossed his maps and wind measures into the river and gets his predictions from the spirits. In fact, Mme. Ouija has rocked the bases of civilization and science to their gizzard. She is the Bolshevik of the psychic realm, and her

Soviet of Ghosts threatens to fire all our Ephesian noodles and lay in ashes the little Swiss republics of our certainties.

But there are just a few of us foolish enough to keep sane in this wreck of matter and crash of reason. When a man dies he leaves behind him his clothes. He leaves behind him also some mental clothes. He doesn't quite die—and more's the pity! A sort of a shell—a habit-shell—still sticks around, fussing and maundering and poking his ether-like nose everywhere. You may break, you may shatter, the vase if you will, but the scent of the rose will cling round the old armchair still. It's something like that—these ghosts, "controls," spirits, and highly magnetized memories.

They have no brains; they are automations, and follow the line of your wish or secret desire like a thirsty rumhound on the trail of a Five-Star label. They bear the same realation to the immortal spark in man as do Tony Sarg's marionettes to Eleonora Duse or John Barrymore.

At the moment of Byron's death at Missolonghi, Greece, he was seen on the streets of London and later was seen to register at the King's reception. He had his alter ego working before death. Some work after death—ask Mme. Ouija; she knows.

But the fact that these shell-game spirits lie is no more proof that they do not exist than the assertion that the human race does not exist because we are all liars. So, brethren, let us watch our step here, for these brainless auras that we leave behind will spill the beans about us on grandson's ouija board. The First Lady of the Land of Liars can't help it. She's only a reporter, and not a creator.

It is the liars, as a matter of fact, that keep the world young and amusing. A good, genial liar has imagination. The face of Truth is always characterless. If you've found the truth, well, you are through; but a cheerful liar goeth all the day—man or ghost. I believe the greatest poet and most vital being this country has yet produced was that farmer out in Ohio who gave up \$15 for a seat to see the coming of the end of the world. How much more such a man gets out of life than we scoffers and truth-sayers! He will make a sublime ghost, and will probably take the laurel from the brow of Baron Munchausen.

Treat 'em rough! That's the slogan when you go over the astral top. Don't slap spirits on the wrist. Don't coax, wheedle, or otherwise mush around them. Threaten to clout 'em over the ethereal conk if they don't "come across." Call them names, as I have. Accuse them of lying, forgery, trickery, and verbal counterfeiting. Bleed the lies out of their bloodless carcasses. Get the music of their vows by hurling Billingsgate at their pied brains.

I believe I am the only ouija-board fan who can make a spirit bat out a home run all around the board when I want to, or cause him to fan out before he gets his eye cocked on my question. I have

peddled my way all through the Habit-Shell Dimension, and returned with a basketful of newly laid goose eggs, the like of which has never been seen before. I have a veritable Who's Who of psychic liars.

Ironing out my nerve, putting on a browbeating, imperious, baritone voice, I sang out for the spirit of Jesse James, and told him to speak the truth.

"It isn't any more necessary here than there," came back across the board.

"Jesse, do you repent of the life you led on earth?"

"Only an hour ago I held up a tallyho full of sightseers from another dimension and got a good load of radium stickpins. Well, you see, it was this way—" and the pointer stopped.

Was Jesse lying or bragging?

"Proves the indestructibility of the inherent proclivities of the primordial individual Karma," I muttered, switching on the spirit of Charles Darwin, the man who put the monkey on the facial map of man.

The great Struggle-for-Lifer bounded on the board as fit as a fiddle at a booze house party. The pointer poked its nose



"Weaving in our ear Legends of the Lost Collar-button."

"You mean to say, old pal, that there'll be a second Deluge without a Noah?"

"You'll find the poems in the editor's coalbin," cut in a voice evidently on Omar's wire.

"Get that dead Harry Kemp to lay off!" thundered Omar.

"But you haven't answered my question," I said. "What luck up there?"

"All you want; but the quality of the stuff is not worth turning on the gas to get, if you're thinking of such a thing. These bent-light cocktails—"

"Chloroform him before he makes out his second will," shot over as mild a mannered spirit as ever cut a Belgian's throat or voted "Yes" on a child-labor bill.

No use. Omar had gone away, probably in the company of Poe and "Jack" Falstaff.

After all others fail, consult Napoleon. "Do they lie over there, Napoleon?" I asked.

"Like a Congressman before election!" came back the answer from the man who will some day use the Kaiser's skull for a snuffbox.

"By the way," he spelled, "what became of my brandy-wagon that got lost at Borodino? And there is a brand-new pack of playing cards hidden in one of the caves at St. Helena. I wish you would—"

"No, this is the spirit of Jenny papa. You're forgiven, but the snow you druv me into that night brought on the sneezing that ended in neumony."

What's the use? They had better hand the telephone lines over there back to their rightful owners; the service is almost earth-like. It gives one the Eternal Repetition creeps.

It is not Sir Oliver Lodge, Conan Doyle or Maurice Maeterlinck who will be of service to mankind; but its greatest benefactor will be a new Alexander Bell of the ouija board who will put in competent operators and get up a 'phone book, with numbers and all, of these loose-lying spirits.

Good-night, Mme. Ouija. There are more mysteries right on this earth than was ever dreamed of in your solid mahogany philosophy.

But if the whole of the human race has gone insane, then to be sane is a form of insanity among the insane, and the insane are— Oh, but what's the good? The Luskers will be after me.



"It is the liars, as a matter of fact, that keep the world young and amusing."



"If Satan is the Father of Lies, he has a wife—Mme. Ouija, who is the Mother of Lies."

into every letter of the alphabet, for all the world like a baby monkey looking for peanuts.

Now, Darwin was a great man, no matter what Corse Peyton says, and I addressed his great habit-shell in a respectful manner.

"Do you still hold to the theory of evolution, Charles?"

"I never said anything about evolution. I did write a book called 'The Descent of Man.' And from what I can see from over here he is still descending. Don't bother me, anyhow; I'm just in an interesting billiard game with Old Neanderthal Skull. Fact is, Ben, there's nothing new over here; just one damn evolution after another."

"What idiots these immortals be!" I wrote in my diary, as I called for that greatest of grape fanciers, Omar Khayyam.

This ancient barfly lumbered on to the board in a very sulky humor, I thought.

"Come out of your booze ken!" I ordered, handing him a string of platitudinous abuse.

"What luck, Omar?" I asked, my voice heavy with an arid grief. Why curse the dear old jug-nuzzler?

"He who lives by water shall die in water," came back mournfully.