

THE DORIS CASE OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITY. By WALTER F. PRINCE, Ph.D., and JAMES H. HYSLOP, Ph.D. Proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research, Vols. IX, X, XI. 1915; 1916; 1917. Three volumes

HERE is a nice little piece of reading for the occult student—some two thousand pages, weighing Lord knows how many pounds! And it contains some stuff. Volumes I and II are by Dr. Prince, and deal with the psychology of the case, its genesis and cure; Volume III is by Hyslop, and takes it up—as we might have supposed—from the “spiritualistic” point of view, and endeavours to prove that the various personalities are not such at all, in reality, but probably “spirits,” who are “obsessing” the poor girl, and causing all the disturbance. Shades of witchcraft and the New Testament—here is a joyous revival, in the Twentieth Century!

We have a girl, Doris Fischer, born in 1889 (of German parents), who developed, in all, five distinct personalities, each of which received a special name. Besides the original “Doris,” we find “Sick Doris,” “Margaret,” and “Sleeping Margaret,” and “Sleeping Real Doris.” These five personalities are said to have shown varied characteristics (as is invariably the case) and to be essentially different, from the psychological point-of-view. As usual, also, several of them developed as the result of emotional shock, and disappeared under hypnosis and psychological treatment; one by one they were eliminated, until only “Real Doris” survived,—with traces of “Sleeping Margaret” persisting, as a sort of undercurrent of reality. These names, of course, apply to the so-called varied personalities which appeared during their shufflings back and forth; that is, their alternate appearances.

It must be admitted at once that Dr. Prince has made some interesting investigations in this curious case, and if we grant the reality of the facts, they have very considerable psychological interest. Of course, it is hard to prove

that the whole thing is not a clever fraud. Girls of the kind have a habit of playing such parts, because of the attention they thereby attract; but let us grant their reality, for the sake of the argument. We have, then, an abnormal individual, who needs treatment and cure; and the sooner cured the better!

Now, at this point, our friends begin messing-about with "mediums," and as the result, obtain an extraordinary amount of rubbish, wholly disconnected from the case, by which they try to prove that the alternating personalities were really "spirits"! Most of these messages were obtained through a "Mrs. Chenoweth" a medium who has figured largely in the Reports of the American Society, though Heaven only knows why, as she gives us a constant flow of the most terrible drivel which it is possible to conceive. Looking through the so-called Reports on this medium, one is impressed with the idea that it is criminal to waste time, and the Society's money, obtaining such stuff, and criminal to keep pouring money down such a sink of Nothingness. What is the hold which this medium seems to have over the venerable Secretary of the Society? Is it more than a mere scientific interest? Are there subtler motives which cause the Head of the Psychological Movement in America to bow solemnly before the crude "Teachings" obtained through this evident fraud of a medium? Any common sense man-of-the-world, reading this stuff, would form his own opinions,—for it is plain to see that,—by merely playing upon his vanity, and flattering him to the skies, this "medium" has managed to ingratiate herself so thoroughly with the noted Professor, that he has become blind to evidence, to facts, and to common sense.

Here are a few typical "Nuggets of Wisdom" from the sittings:

"They are not so clear about the life here as they will be when they come but they mean all right. I had faith too but the knowledge is better. I had in mind a prayer that I used to want her to say long ago for I felt it impor-

tant to pray and teach her to say the little prayer." (1917, p. 327.)

If this isn't mediumistic cant, I should like to know what is!

However, on another occasion, we read: "Go to hell and there you will find the information you seek my sweet friend." (p. 622.) Here is some sound advice!

This is another little gem, which is dished-up as part of the "proof of immortality":

"Mamma gave some advice and now comes to help in the work of proving that the love and care and interest does not cease at death but all is intensified and desires become actions and have effect in friends and loved ones. No one has been able to prove the power of thought and we are not able to prove that we do some things but when we find that the things we think and wish for are taking place then we realize that our thought has had some power even though we did not speak or act. I have no interest whatever that the things said do not match with what I believed in the past. One must tell things as they find them and not as they wish they were."

*O tempora, o mores!* Let us admit that "immortality" has now been proved; that Hyslop's Marvellous Medium has furnished the demonstration! We are to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, and there assist the Angels in the compilation of English Grammars (let us hope) for the use of those who communicate through Mrs. Chenoweth!

When one reads through stuff like this, one is driven to ask the question How can men of intelligence and learning, perhaps with skill in other lines of research, be driven to accept such nonsense as proof of anything beyond obvious fraud on the part of the "medium"? How can their sense of all that constitutes evidence be so lacking,—their judgment so at fault, as to accept this drivel as proof of "spirits"? One can form only the opinion—one seems driven to this conclusion—that it is the

"will to believe" which has influenced them in this manner--not the evidence itself, but their own warped and faulty judgment.

If one analyzes the facts, he finds that practically all those who have advertised their belief in "Immortality" are men well along in life--practically all past sixty, and some of them many years older. Evidently, they are entering their second childhood. They are so concerned with saving their own souls, with unifying "Science and Religion," with showing that they themselves are probably "Immortal," that they have lost all sense of humour, of proportion, of evidence, of all these qualities which together constitute the truly scientific scholar. As they are getting along in life, and can no longer enjoy it, they are haunted by the Spectre of Annihilation; and to escape this, they grasp at any straw, accept any evidence, swallow any "facts," given through a twopenny medium, which seem to afford even the slightest "evidence" for "survival." The result is that they all accept such rubbish as that given above (which is part of the official record), and seriously claim that it affords them *proof* of survival-of Immortality! Heigh, Ho! This is a sad world, my children, but never sadder than when we see otherwise good intellects going to the Dogs in this fashion.

HODGSON Y. KNOTT.